United Nations S/PV.6537

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6537th meeting

Tuesday, 17 May 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mr. Fernandes
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Khachab
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Portugal	Ms. Cortes Palma
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President (*spoke in French*): Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/305, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1982 (2011).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

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President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
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	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Khachab
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Portugal	Mr. Vaz Patto
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
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Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Karin Landgren, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi, and Mr. Paul Seger, Permanent Representative of Switzerland, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

I now give the floor to Ms. Landgren.

Ms. Landgren (*spoke in French*): Since the last meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Burundi (see S/PV.6439) five months ago, developments have taken place in the country, in particular with respect to transitional justice, human rights and laws governing the political parties.

Last month, Parliament adopted a law on the functioning and organization of political parties. The extra-parliamentary opposition, fearing an attempt to constrain its activities, followed this process closely. In response to that concern, an amendment that would have required all political parties to obtain new authorization was modified. Some opposition political parties still believe that the new law restricts the political space and have announced that they will not comply with it. The Government is also in the process of drafting a bill on the status of political parties in the opposition that would allow the creation of an official post of leader of the opposition, and on the funding of political parties and the functions of civil society organizations.

National, regional and international actors, including the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), continue to encourage initiatives to promote dialogue between the Government and the extra-parliamentary opposition. To date, none of these initiatives has had the desired result of returning the main leaders of the opposition to Burundi so that they can again participate in the political life of the country.

On 14 March, the Executive Committee of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) expelled a party executive, the Secretary of its Council of Elders, following his allegations of corruption and impunity within the party. He was replaced during the course of a special party congress on 14 May, during which congress members assessed the achievements of the CNDD-FDD since 2005.

While the security situation is generally calm, there has been an increase in violent incidents in Bujumbura Rural province in April. Until recently, the violence was attributed to bandits, but the Defence Ministry has just publicly blamed the lack of security on Mr. Agathon Rwasa and Mr. Léonard Nyangoma. The Government has launched important initiatives in the province, to include socio-economic recovery activities and the mandatory collection of weapons held illegally by the population. In a speech in Bujumbura Rural on 6 May, President Nkurunziza reassured the population that security would be re-established within two months.

(*spoke in English*)

The Government is preparing the second poverty reduction strategy paper. It will incorporate key elements of the Strategic Framework For Peacebuilding and harmonize efforts in both peace consolidation and development planning. This document, anticipated for July, will give focus to governance goals and resource mobilization efforts.

Burundi faces severe poverty and high unemployment, including among young people. The cost of fuel has increased by over 20 per cent since October, raising the prices of all basic commodities in turn and placing severe strains on many families. Burundi was traditionally self-sufficient in food production, but this is no longer the case, and 90 per cent of Burundian families now live on an average of half a hectare of eroded land. Agricultural tools and technology remain poor, and market incentives are limited.

Land has been the cause of many past conflicts in Burundi and remains an emotive issue. Parliament adopted a revised land code in April that includes the decentralization of land issues to the communes and

the establishment of a National Land Commission tasked with managing the redistribution of land and resolving disputes. These issues are among the daunting socio-economic challenges that need to be addressed to help consolidate peace in the country, as highlighted during the meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 21 April.

Graft remains a problem in Burundi. In April, the Ministry of Good Governance presented a broad-based national plan on good governance and the fight against corruption, taking on board substantive comments from the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and bilateral partners. This is intended as a framework for all partners and includes elements related to elections; judicial, legal and public sector reforms; human rights; and the media. This strategy is expected to be adopted on 23 May.

Other steps include the introduction of performance contracts for all officials, including ministers, since the beginning of the year. Their work will be evaluated every six months. All Government ministers have also presented their work plans to Parliament. In his Labour Day address to the nation on 1 May, President Nkurunziza reiterated the need to meet performance targets, warning that underperforming public officials would be dismissed.

I am pleased to report that the process of establishing an independent national human rights commission has moved steadily forward. On 5 January, the law creating the commission was promulgated by President Nkurunziza. An ad hoc parliamentary commission was then set up and vetted a large number of candidates. Twenty-one names were submitted to the National Assembly, which is expected to nominate seven as commissioners. I understand that this issue will be taken up today during a three-day extraordinary session of the National Assembly.

An impartial and independent national human rights commission can strengthen Burundi's compliance with its international obligations and enhance the protection and promotion of human rights, thus promoting national stability. In a related positive development, the Government responded favourably to a request for a return visit by the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi, Mr. Fatsah Ouguergouz. His visit began yesterday.

A persistent concern has been the continued reports of extrajudicial executions. BNUB investigated and documented nine such cases between January and Much 2011 alone, and several other cases reported in April are under investigation. Between August and November last year, BNUB documented 11 extrajudicial executions. The Government set up a commission of inquiry in October 2010 to investigate specific allegations made against the security forces in this regard. It remained dormant until the end of April, when the Government announced that the commission had resumed work. We encourage the Government and the commission to establish the facts and make actionable recommendations where violations are established.

I want to acknowledge the relatively vibrant media that exists in Burundi, and the recent resolution of a case that had raised concerns. Jean-Claude Kavumbagu, director of NetPress, was detained in July 2010 on a charge of treason. While the State Prosecutor sought a maximum life sentence, the court acquitted Mr. Kavumbagu of the treason charge last Friday, finding him guilty of violating press laws. He was fined and sentenced to eight months in prison. As he had been detained for 10 months, he was released yesterday.

There are significant developments to report in the realm of transitional justice, where — following the national consultations that concluded in 2010 — the Government is taking steps to set up these mechanisms. On 3 May, a delegation led by the Minister of External Affairs outlined the Government's transitional justice strategy during a meeting with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay. The Government intends to create a truth and reconciliation commission, to be operational by January 2012, and to establish a judicial mechanism to address impunity after the commission has completed its work.

These are important commitments. The Government has underlined to BNUB that the truth and reconciliation commission process must be grounded in reconciliation and not in score-settling. For that, broad public awareness and orientation will be crucial. BNUB continues to sensitize the public through workshops where the results of the national consultations are shared and discussed. The Government will set up a seven-member preparatory committee to develop appropriate legislation and a budget and to review the experiences of other countries that have had truth and reconciliation commissions.

The United Nations looks forward to more detailed discussions with the Government, and remains ready to assist in the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms consistent with international standards. We anticipate that international financial support will also be needed in this area.

The full reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants is crucial for sustained peace in the country. While they had all received reintegration assistance by the end of April, much still remains to be done to help them become productive members of society. To that end, the Government and BNUB have developed a proposal to support the continued socio-economic reintegration of people affected by the conflict, including ex-combatants. The $24 million programme would support labour-intensive projects targeting the demobilized, youth and other vulnerable groups. The programme is in line with the United Nations strategic development framework in Burundi for the period 2010 to 2014. We are working with the Peacebuilding Support Office to mobilize initial funding to launch the programme.

As stipulated in resolution 1959 (2010), the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) has been succeeded by a scaled-down presence, namely, the United Nations Office in Burundi. I am pleased to report that the transition is going well. We expect to reach BNUB's authorized level of 134 staff by 1 July. That represents a 70 per cent reduction from BINUB. As difficult as it is for any staff member to lose his or her job in the current climate, the process has been peaceful. We continue to work with the Government of Burundi to ensure that the needs of separated staff are dealt with in a responsible manner.

Throughout the transition, BNUB has continued to carry out its core tasks in support of the consolidation of peace and democracy in Burundi. We continue to encourage efforts to promote inclusive political dialogue between the Government and the extra-parliamentary opposition. We are helping the Government to strengthen its key institutions and supporting efforts to professionalize and enhance the capacity of security and defence forces. We are working with civil society and other stakeholders to promote and protect human rights and prepare the ground for the establishment of viable transitional justice mechanisms. And BNUB is identifying possible areas of support with regard to the country's integration into the East African Community, which is determined to see Burundi move forward in peace and economic strength.

In accordance with its mandate, BNUB is currently developing benchmarks for its exit and evolution into a regular United Nations country team presence. Discussions within the United Nations family have begun and will be followed by consultations with national and international partners. As the Council is aware, the Secretary-General has appointed Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly as my Deputy and United Nations Resident Coordinator in Burundi. I look forward to working closely with her to maximize the impact of the United Nations system's efforts in support of the Burundian Government and people.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Council and of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations family and all other partners who have been so steadfast in their support of Burundi in its remarkable transition. The commendable efforts of the Burundian Government and people in consolidating the gains achieved in peacebuilding and paving the way for sustainable development deserve our strong and continued support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Landgren for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Paul Seger.

Mr. Seger (*spoke in French*): Please pardon, Mr. President, the slight delay in my arrival. The Swiss desire for punctuality stands in contrast to the slowness for which we are sometimes known. This reminds me of what Albert Einstein once said about dying. He said that, on that day, he would like to return to Switzerland, as everything there happened 10 years after everywhere else. But we are not here to talk about Switzerland or Albert Einstein, but instead of Burundi.

As Karin Landgren has just mentioned, the most important development on Burundi since the Council's last meeting (see S/PV.6439) on this issue at which I participated was, without a doubt, the development of the final document containing the conclusions of the fourth biannual review of the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi. As the Security Council is aware, that document was adopted on 21 April. This is essentially the last document of its kind. Henceforth, we will try to combine the peacebuilding strategy with the strategy to combat poverty, illustrating what I said during the last

meeting, namely, that there can be no peace without development or development without peace. I will shortly return to the new strategic framework for combating poverty that is being developed.

Allow me very briefly now to refer to the document we adopted in April. It focuses on two tracks, namely, the political-institutional and the socio-economic. Those two tracks, which include the four priorities we in the Peacebuilding Commission have identified in close coordination with the Government of Burundi, will henceforth serve to inform the methodology and priorities of the Commission. We have deliberately limited ourselves to certain important strategic elements; the Peacebuilding Commission cannot do everything. As the Council is aware, our role is to support the United Nations and its Integrated Office in Burundi, which is very ably led by Karin Landgren. We are a supporting political body, not an operational one.

With regard to those priorities, we focus on two elements when it comes to the political-institutional track, namely, consolidating a culture of democracy and dialogue — as my colleague Karin Landgren has mentioned — and, secondly, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. Dialogue and democracy, as we have heard on numerous occasions, are indeed major challenges that we must address jointly with the Government of Burundi, whom the Commission would like to help to establish an environment and space wherein all the parties, whether represented in the Parliament or not, can find a way to discuss their problems and issues in a peaceful, non-violent and civilized manner. I think we are on the right track, but there is still work to be done. With regard to good governance, human rights and the rule of law, there are three issues we want to address, that is, corruption, human rights themselves and transitional justice.

On the socio-economic front, as Ms. Landgren also has mentioned, the greatest challenges facing us when it comes to combating poverty is how to integrate the most vulnerable and those most affected by the conflict into economic life so that they can have the means to live dignified and productive lives. We must also try to ensure that there is no temptation to return to violence by providing a logical viable alternative. We are currently awaiting the finalization of the strategic framework being drawn up by the Government of Burundi in order to know exactly how the Peacebuilding Commission can assist the country.

The second aspect of that track is regional integration, especially within the East African Community. When I visited the region and the country in February, I also visited Arusha and met with the Secretary-General of the Community. I personally believe that investing in regional integration, and especially in the East African Community, is to invest in the future of Burundi. Personally, I was very impressed by the work and momentum being developed by the East African Community.

I will make a few detailed remarks on the various aspects I have just mentioned. With regard to the poverty reduction strategy paper, as I just said, progress is being made, and we encourage the Government and its partners not only to focus on integrating these issues in their documents but also to stress their importance by giving them a formal place in the Partners Coordination Group, which is itself very important. The Burundi configuration will continue to actively support the Government in its efforts to integrate peacebuilding aspects in its poverty reduction strategy paper towards the shared goal of concluding a single framework that will enjoy the committed support of the international community to Burundi and reflect peacebuilding considerations.

In the document adopted in April, which I mentioned earlier, we defined the various commitments of actors. In the area of poverty reduction, the Commission is seeking to organize a donors conference in autumn 2011. Perhaps here I can make an appeal to all members of the Security Council and to the international community as a whole to continue to support Burundi. I believe the country needs and has a right to what I would call a peace dividend. Without socio-economic support for political efforts, we will not succeed. I believe that this aspect cannot be overemphasized.

Financial and economic support for Burundi is very important. The Commission itself, as members know, does not have resources. We do not have our own funds. The only thing we can do is to support and assist the country in its efforts to attain funds from bilateral and multilateral donors.

I will be very brief in my remarks on the other matters, as Karin Landgren has already covered the most important aspects. With regard to the question of dialogue, our aim should be, as I said, to establish a framework that will allow all parties to express

themselves openly and freely, and to create conditions for political actors currently abroad to return to the country. There has been some progress in this area, with, for example, the draft law on political parties and a communiqué from the opposition reflecting some forward movement, but unfortunately I believe that the current draft does not yet adequately satisfy the views and needs of the extra-parliamentary opposition.

With regard to transitional justice, the Government recently held meetings in Geneva with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I believe the processes are in place. My suggestion would be to approach these topics with a clear vision of the coherence needed to achieve peacebuilding and unity. I believe that the way we address the past is also a way to move into the present and the future. I believe it would be useful and important to do this with a clear vision that will strengthen unity in the country and not create new divisions. Things are undoubtedly on the right track, and we stand ready to support the country in these efforts.

With regard to human rights, I believe Ms. Landgren also covered the main points. I fully confirm what she has just said. I believe that the establishment of an independent national human rights commission is important and hope that it will soon be fully operational. We also welcome, as Ms. Landgren noted, the recent visit of the independent expert on the human rights situation in Burundi. That having been said, we must continue to pay close attention to the situation regarding investigations into torture and extrajudicial killings. Here, we must encourage the country to redouble its efforts to investigate such cases.

In conclusion, what are the next steps? We have established a steering group within the Peacebuilding Commission composed of a limited number of countries and open to all members of the Commission. I would like to thank several members of the Council present today, and the permanent members in particular, for their participation in the steering group. That is very encouraging. We will closely monitor the operational phase, which has now begun, fully aware of the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission is not an operational body and that the work on the ground is being done primarily by the United Nations Office in Burundi and other United Nations entities. But we thought it would be valuable to establish a body that could monitor developments in Burundi more closely and continuously. All of this was done in light of our common goal — and here again I come back to what Ms. Landgren said — to ensure that, as the Commission's work comes to an end, Burundi will be able to live without the Commission in the near future. Again, Burundi's integration into regional bodies is of great importance in my view.

I would like to reaffirm our full support to the Security Council, to Ms. Langren and to the Government of Burundi. We are here to support them and will continue to do so with the political and other resources at our disposal. I hope that we will see these efforts bear fruit in the near future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Seger for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Burundi.

Mr. Gahutu (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Sir, for having invited us to this meeting. I would also like to acknowledge and confirm the various points made by the previous speakers, especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Ambassador Seger in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration. I can only agree with their remarks on the various issues addressed.

Here I would also like to welcome the appointment of Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly to support the United Nations Office in Burundi. I believe that this has strengthened the team for the good of our country.

Following the 2010 electoral process, which was carried out successfully under international supervision, Burundi established institutions to conduct the second legislature under Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic. We would like to recall here that the 2010 electoral process was a success thanks to the spirit of dialogue that prevailed between the Government and its partners, a spirit that was forged through the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, which was drawn up by the political parties, civil society, the Parliament and the Government.

The first stage of this success was the consensus as to the composition of the National Independent Electoral Commission, which organized the elections, and on the electoral code, which guided the Commission and the parties who competed during the

electoral process. In parallel with the Independent Electoral Commission and the electoral code, the spirit of dialogue also inspired the establishment of a permanent forum for dialogue among the political parties, which is today supported by the ministers responsible for the interior and good governance. This forum for dialogue has recently been expanded by the creation of the institution of the ombudsperson, a mediator between the Government and citizens.

With respect to good governance, a major Burundian delegation has just returned from Geneva, where it had constructive talks with the High Commissioner for Human Rights on setting up mechanisms for transitional justice. As a result of this visit, the High Commissioner for Human Rights promised to assist with this process until its completion. A first team of experts will thus be sent on-site in June. The truth and reconciliation commission is to be set up in 2012, followed by the establishment of a special tribunal for Burundi. These are to be the two transitional justice mechanisms.

At the same time, the process of setting up the independent national human rights commission, in accordance with the Paris Principles, is also moving ahead very quickly. The President of Burundi has just convened by decree a special session of the National Assembly to elect the members and the bureau of Burundi's human rights commission, which is to be held from 17 to 19 May.

We would also like to announce, as mentioned by previous speakers, that the independent expert to provide backing for the Government of Burundi in its efforts to improve the human rights situation is now visiting the country to prepare his last report before the human rights commission begins its work. The commission will then be responsible for reporting on the situation of human rights in Burundi.

In the area of security, an extensive programme to bring defence forces back to their barracks and to deploy the national police has been carried out. This programme was followed by activities to promote ethical and principled behaviour among the military and the police. The programme to disarm the civilian population, through the commission created for that purpose, has made progress and has enabled the retrieval of 83,287 weapons and 620,000 rounds of ammunition from the population, as well as the destruction of 41,320 weapons and 398,000 rounds of ammunition.

At the same time, we have also established the legal and institutional framework allowing us to manage effectively and secure the weapons held by public servants. However, all of the weapons held illegally by the population have not yet been collected. This explains the acts of banditry that have taken place here and there in the country.

On behalf of the Government of Burundi, I would like to take this opportunity to make a new appeal to all of our partners to assist us, to preserve the achievements and progress that have been made in various areas and to help us face the challenges that remain to be tackled.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite the members of the Council to continue the discussion on this issue in informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

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New York

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Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Amieyeofori
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 2 May 2011 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2011/282)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 2 May 2011 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2011/282)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme, and Mr. Colin Bruce, Director of Operations and Strategy for Africa of the World Bank, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Pedro Serrano, Acting Head of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

I wish to welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/282, which contains a letter dated 2 May 2011 from the Permanent Representative of France addressed to the Secretary-General containing a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative. I welcome this opportunity to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United Nations effort in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of our largest and most complex operations. With the help of many partners, the Congolese people are rebuilding their country. The United Nations remains committed to fully supporting these efforts.

Allow me to briefly address the four topics under discussion today.

First, with respect to security and the protection of civilians, security has improved in most of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the east, there has been progress in the dismantling of foreign and Congolese armed groups. That is the result of a combination of factors: military operations conducted in accordance with the conditionality policy of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), effective programmes to disarm, demobilize and repatriate foreign ex-combatants, efforts to extend State authority and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's improved relations with neighbouring Great Lakes countries.

All of these achievements must be sustained.

Foreign and Congolese armed groups continue to pose significant threats. The humanitarian situation remains serious, with 1.7 million people displaced. And, of course, human rights violations, including murder, sexual violence, and the looting and burning of villages continue to have large-scale humanitarian consequences.

(*spoke in English*)

The second topic I wish to address is that of elections.

Properly conducted, transparent elections can ease tensions and build transparent and accountable institutions. But they also entail risks, especially in societies divided by or recovering from conflict.

The presidential and National Assembly elections scheduled for 28 November, to be followed by provincial and local elections, can help to further consolidate peace and stability. Those elections must be timely, transparent, credible, peaceful and secure, offering all Congolese a full opportunity to participate freely without fear of harassment or violence. We must do our utmost to ensure that violence does not break out before, during or after the elections. We have invested much, and there is much to lose. This is critical to ensuring the country's continued progress. I urge all Congolese stakeholders to work together to ensure that the elections meet these basic conditions.

MONUSCO is expected to continue to provide logistical and technical support, for which the Mission will require additional resources. The Mission also stands ready to support the work of national and international election observers. In addition, it will be critical to provide the necessary equipment to the Congolese police units that are being trained on electoral security by MONUSCO, France and the Government.

Third are the rule of law, governance and institution-building. Long-term peace, stability and development will require strong national institutions, accessible to all, that can provide basic services and, most fundamentally, security and rule of law. I welcome the increased leadership of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government in addressing sexual violence, including the fight against impunity. This has included strengthening the military justice system and prosecuting some of those accused of sexual and gender-based violence and other crimes. Other advances include steps to establish special chambers to investigate and prosecute serious human rights violations.

However, I remain deeply troubled by ongoing reports of widespread sexual violence across the country. I once again urge the Congolese authorities to do more to put an end to such crimes. The consequences of sexual violence are profound and far-reaching. In addition to its untold harm to victims, such violence deepens conflicts and worsens already dire conditions. This is especially true when perpetrators go unpunished. I urge international partners to provide necessary support for the Congolese national police, army and justice system, and to make identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators a priority.

At the same time, we must ensure that the victims of sexual violence receive proper attention and care. Pursuant to resolution 1888 (2009), we have deployed a team of experts that is working with national authorities to strengthen the rule of law. The professionalization of the national security services and the strengthening of the judiciary are essential to human rights, humanitarian access and the protection of civilians. The cycle of impunity must end.

(*spoke in French*)

Fourth and finally is economic development. There cannot be lasting stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo without economic recovery, reconstruction and development. I am encouraged by emerging efforts to combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources, for example through such regional initiatives as the Lusaka summit convened by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Such steps can help the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prevent acts that drive conflict and deprive the country of vital revenues.

The Congolese people should be proud of the gains of the past decade, but the situation remains fragile. The challenges loom large. The successful conduct of credible elections will be a milestone on the road to stability. I encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, national stakeholders and the international community to jointly identify the priorities of the next phase and the nature of the United Nations support. The United Nations remains committed to working closely with all partners to provide all possible support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Tshibanda (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank you for your timely convening of this important meeting on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this important year of my country's history. Through you, I should also like to thank France, with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has close and long-standing ties of mutual respect and esteem.

I wish to echo the unanimous praise of last month's Colombian presidency of the Council, and to express my personal gratitude for the zeal and expertise with which the Colombian presidency accomplished its tasks.

I further wish to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose introductory statement reflected his tireless will to strive to build peace in my country. We shall never be able to thank him enough for his personal involvement in seeking a lasting solution to the disruption of peace and international security that, at a certain point in time, prevailed in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, and for having spared no effort to enable the universal Organization to help the young Congolese democracy to blossom and the Congolese people to attain their political and socio-economic aspirations.

The United Nations engagement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo dates back to July 1960 and is currently represented by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which replaced the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) almost a year ago. My presence here today demonstrates the obvious importance that the Congolese Government attaches to the support that my country has received from the United Nations and the international community.

Indeed, we believe that we are jointly responsible for regular evaluations of the United Nations activities in support of our Republic's Government in order to ensure that they remain relevant to our objectives and to the changing nature of the challenges we face, and that our partnership becomes increasingly effective, thereby enhancing the Organization's credibility. My deepest wish is that the exchanges that we shall hold at this meeting will allow us to forge a threefold consensus between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council on the progress that has been made towards normalizing the situation in my country, on the obstacles that continue to impede that normalization and that urgently require our joint attention, and — on the basis of that dual evaluation — on the United Nations future activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular with respect to MONUSCO's mandate.

In our view, there is no better point of departure for this exercise than the results achieved to date by the joint assessment established pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 1925 (2010). From that perspective, we recall that resolution 1925 (2010) identified three main objectives for the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO, with specific results to be obtained for each objective. As the Council will understand, there is no need for me to remind those who adopted this resolution of its objectives and the results expected for each of them.

In that context, the conclusions of the joint assessment can be summarized today as follows. The first objective concerns military operations and the reduction of the threat posed by armed groups. First, military operations as such have ended. Ongoing efforts are aimed at neutralizing the last pockets of resistance of roving, residual armed elements in order to eliminate all threats to peace.

Secondly, operations led by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), with the support of MONUSCO, have drastically reduced the operational capacities of armed groups. Those groups now consist of six to 12 elements, the extent of whose criminal activities nevertheless continues to pose a threat to the security of the population in some remote areas of the country.

Thirdly, an ever-decreasing number of areas where security is still disturbed by the presence of those roving, residual armed elements are viewed and treated by both parties as sensitive and unstable. Nevertheless, they are entirely under the control of Government forces.

Fourthly, in their missions, the Government forces often benefit from the logistical support provided by MONUSCO.

The second objective concerns the means available to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to effectively protect the population and gradually take over the security functions of MONUSCO. In that regard, initiatives have been taken to equip the country with increasingly effective security forces. Within the FARDC, those initiatives have involved the identification and management of troops, the reorganization of troops into regiments, the resumption of training for units and the recycling of existing troops.

Regarding the Congolese national police, it is worth recalling a number of points. First, training will be provided for border police, who are to be deployed from Kalemie to Ituri to assist border post services and mitigate border porosity. Secondly, 400 elements from the armed groups will be deployed once they have received appropriate training in Kapalata, in Orientale province. Thirdly, police officers will be recycled by MONUSCO. Fourthly, a vote will be held on the reform of the Congolese national police, the legislation for which is soon to be enacted.

The third objective is to strengthen State authority throughout the national territory by

implementing civilian administration, which is the guarantor of the rule of law. Here, we would recall several points. First, the legitimate authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo control almost all of the territory that had previously been controlled by armed groups. However, some vestiges of the former parallel administration of the Congrès national pour la défense du people remain in the territory of Masisi, as do some of the Simba group in Maiko National Park.

Secondly, the Congolese national police are present throughout the liberated territories, with the exception of northern Dungu. However, their effectiveness is constrained by the shortage of officers, lack of logistical support and insufficient training of staff.

Thirdly, the judicial system is playing an increased role and its functioning continues to improve. New prosecutors have been recruited, trained and deployed in sensitive areas. Furthermore, in provinces where abuses have occurred, military and civilian circuit courts have been set up, with support from MONUSCO, to resolve the problems created by the distance of courts and tribunals from the areas where crimes are committed.

Fourthly, unfortunately prison management in the field is insufficient and, where it is present, there are many deficiencies. For instance, infrastructure is outdated and staff, resources and training are lacking.

This stark and objective evaluation is the outcome of the joint actions undertaken by experts on both sides — MONUSCO and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Given the security situation that prevailed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo only two years ago, this assessment provides ample grounds for satisfaction. Substantial progress has indeed been made in reducing threats to the security of our people and in improving the conditions for the Government's takeover of security responsibilities. In addition, with the normalization of our relations with neighbouring States, we can legitimately consider ourselves to have emerged from the peacemaking and peacekeeping stages.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain and we do not seek to downplay them. They are, however, more closely linked to the requirements for peacebuilding, democracy, good governance and building State capacities. In that way, the State will be able to more efficiently and effectively carry out its national functions.

From that standpoint, the Government has set itself a number of priorities for which we expect we the support of the international community. First, the organization of elections at the end of the current Government's mandate will ensure that the Congolese people can take charge of their own destiny.

Secondly, security sector reform involving the army, the police, the judicial system and penal services will be undertaken so as to guarantee the rights and security of citizens, stabilize the country and the region, and put an end to the impunity of those who are found guilty of unspeakable crimes, such as the rape of women and other massive human rights violations. The Government's commitment to fighting those crimes was recently highlighted by the lengthy prison sentences handed down for crimes of rape committed by numerous officials, including high-ranking army and police officers.

Thirdly, efforts will be made to combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which has exacerbated the conflict in the eastern part of our country and throughout the region, in particular by implementing the instruments that were adopted to that end at the Extraordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Lusaka last December.

Fourthly, capacity-building efforts will be made for the public and territorial administrations with a view to successfully implementing the country's stabilization programmes. Those include the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan in Conflict-Affected Areas of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (STAREC), and the decentralization and national reconstruction programmes commonly referred to as the "five pillars of the Republic".

Fifthly, we will strengthen good-neighbourly relations with all neighbouring States through dialogue and the enhancement of regional cooperation, which is the gauge of peace and stability both within the Democratic Republic of the Congo and throughout the region.

Turning to the elections, the Government is determined to meet the challenge of holding them peacefully, in keeping with the timetable established in the Constitution and by guaranteeing the free and

democratic nature of the elections. To that end, we have established the Independent National Electoral Commission, which is the institution responsible under the Constitution for organizing the elections. It consists almost equally of representatives of the majority and of the opposition.

Some other important developments have improved the prospects for holding these elections. Voter registration and review of the electoral rolls has already begun. These operations are proceeding normally in several provinces at once. After wide-ranging consultations with political participants from across the spectrum, the Electoral Commission has published an overall electoral timetable, according to which elections for the President of the Republic and national deputies will be held on 28 November, and the President-elect sworn in and inaugurated on 20 December. It is an eloquent indication of the Commission's bipartisan nature that the timetable was presented and explained on behalf of the Commission by its Vice-Chairman, who represents the opposition, not the majority.

Secondly, in evidence of the approval of the timetable by almost the entire political class, important opposition leaders confirmed their participation in the forthcoming elections by registering after its publication. In that regard, I note that the law establishing the Supreme Council for Audiovisual and Other Communications, which is mandated by the Constitution with ensuring freedom of the press and respect for ethics in the dissemination of information, as well as equitable access for all political parties, associations and citizens to official channels of information and communication — a significant role where elections are concerned — has been enacted, and the Council itself will be established shortly.

Furthermore, despite its limited resources for addressing the challenges of reconstruction in a post-conflict country, the Government has committed to covering 60 per cent of the total cost of the elections — proof of its willingness to take ownership of the process and its commitment to consolidating democracy. It is clear that there is still a balance of 40 per cent needed to fully fund the election budget. I reiterate the Government's appeal to the international community to come to our aid in financing the gap. In this regard, we have already submitted a request to the United Nations for logistical support from MONUSCO, since the size of our national territory, coupled with the current sorry state of our transportation infrastructure, is one of the main potential obstacles to the smooth conduct of our electoral operations. MONUC's assistance in this area was crucial in 2006, as that of MONUSCO will also undoubtedly be in the next elections. We would like to express our gratitude for that assistance in advance.

That said, thanks to the technical assistance coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that we have already received from the international community, and drawing on the practical experience of election organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo bequeathed to us through the human resources of the Independent Electoral Commission, the National Independent Electoral Commission is equipped to conduct the entire electoral operation, with the help of the Government and the country's other institutions according to their areas of competence.

Furthermore, unlike the situation in 2006, when the nation was in the throes of armed conflict and the authority of the State was almost non-existent in a significant portion of the country, the security situation is now stabilized virtually throughout the national territory, and we have reached the end of a legislative term characterized by institutions that function smoothly, lively democratic debate and freedom of expression. Beyond the intensity of the build-up to the elections, we believe there is therefore nothing major that can impede or derail the electoral process to the point of requiring any contribution from MONUSCO beyond its logistical support, or any further special dispensation that would undermine the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In this regard, as in everything else, we would ask that, however essential it may be, all future assistance from the United Nations, and MONUSCO in particular, be conceived and organized in a way that makes full use of the investments made by the international community. In this way, we can end the crisis of legitimacy, relaunch the economy and rebuild a State in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — in other words, capitalize and build on the remarkable if still precarious results that we have achieved in this area by working together in the past few years.

In that regard, and considering the evolution of the security situation on the ground, we believe that the time has come for us to launch together a transition

phase that will include a restructuring and reconfiguration of MONUSCO and its mandate with a view to an orderly and progressive yet steady withdrawal of its military component, while taking into account the recommendations of our respective experts on the joint assessment team. As a responsible partner, the Government assures the Council that it has no intention of jeopardizing the consolidation of the security situation under way. It believes rather that the irreplaceable assistance of the United Nations should be adapted to the new realities on the ground. To that end, we will limit ourselves to the following comments.

Regarding security sector reform, which is a top priority for our Government, we have opted to focus mainly on bilateral cooperation in the area of reform of the armed forces. In this context, agreements have already been negotiated with a number of friendly countries and are in the process of being implemented. We nonetheless count on MONUSCO for reform of the national police force, with the immediate goal of training national units needed to police the elections.

As regards judicial reform, the Government is hoping for the support of the international community for its efforts in the area of zero-tolerance policies that seek to end impunity throughout the country. More specifically, the Democratic Republic of the Congo seeks significant support for establishing the joint tribunals that were proposed in the mapping exercise report so as to identify crimes committed during the period covered by the report.

On the economic front, with the consolidation of peace and improved employment and income opportunities, especially among young people and women, the fundamentals are generally good but still fragile. In order to consolidate them and create the conditions for strong, sustainable growth with shared social benefits, the Government intends to pursue a prudent fiscal policy, conservative management of the public purse, development of basic social and economic structures, and the structural reforms begun a number of years ago with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and UNDP. We also intend to improve the business climate, particularly through legal and judicial security, diversifying resources for growth and seeking greater added value locally, especially by giving a greater role to small and medium-sized businesses. As we pursue this commitment, we call for assistance on the development agencies referred to previously and other agencies of the United Nations system that could help us meet the Millennium Development Goals.

In this respect, the elements related to economic recovery, social rehabilitation and insertion that are part of the stabilization and reconstruction programmes are particularly significant. These elements include STAREC and the programme developed by the United Nations country team aimed at ensuring consolidation and development in the western and central regions, which, while spared from conflict, still face the consequences of the instability that is rife in the north and east of the country. We therefore count on the active involvement of the United Nations and the international community in their financing and implementation.

It is commonly acknowledged today that the assistance provided to countries in post-conflict situations, such as mine, must meet those countries' priorities and real needs so that the population can truly benefit from the peace dividends. The Democratic Republic of the Congo acknowledges that it needs lasting peace in order to efficiently and effectively tackle the challenges of building an efficient State, a State that is strong and prosperous, that respects the rights of its citizens and that is able to meet their needs. It therefore still expects a great deal from the United Nations, which undeniably has the capacity to help strengthen Congolese public institutions. We only ask that we be able to shoulder, as responsible adults, the prerogatives of our restored sovereignty.

The operative words, in the reflections that we invite the Council to undertake on the future of our cooperation, are "dialogue" and "partnership", based on the principle of ownership for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of subsidiarity when it comes to the international community. To be effective, we acknowledge that ownership requires strengthening our national capacities. We are convinced that there is, in this respect, a great deal of room for fruitful cooperation.

Mr. Messone (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Towards the end of 2011, important elections — elections that will be decisive for the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo — will take place. This debate is all the more important as it affords us the opportunity to examine issues of major importance for the future of that country, in particular the State

regaining full control of its sovereign functions, the future role of the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the support it must provide to this electoral process, the measures to strengthen security, and the issue of combating the illicit exploitation of natural resources.

My delegation would like to congratulate France and to thank it for having convened this debate. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his contribution to this debate and to voice to him our support for the United Nations contribution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I welcome the presence of Mr. Raymond Tshibanda Mulongo, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We thank him for the information he has shared with us, and we associate ourselves with his appeal for action based on dialogue and partnership in the Democratic Republic. Finally, I welcome Mr. Tegegnework Gettu of the United Nations Development Programme, Mr. Colin Bruce, and Mr. Pedro Serrano for their participation in this debate.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the scene of the biggest United Nations peacekeeping operation — the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) — hence our interest in a return to security, peace and stability in that country. The mandate of MONUSCO, which was established in 2010 in cooperation with the Congolese authorities, will come to an end on 30 June. The objective is to gradually transfer to the Congolese authorities the entirety of their sovereign responsibilities. That transfer will of course be supported with all the assistance necessary to enable the country to continue to pursue stabilization, peacebuilding, reconstruction and the resumption of its economic activity.

The question then arises of the role of the United Nations and, in general, that of the international community in that transfer of responsibility, which will of course not take place without difficulties. Challenges related to the security and political situation and the economic reconstruction of the country will lie at the very heart of this process.

With respect to security, we congratulate the Government for the efforts made in this field. However, the situation remains difficult, and the priority should be strengthening security, especially with the approach of elections. Eventually, however, the Democratic Republic of the Congo will require enhanced assistance.

The extent of the eastern border makes it very difficult to control the armed groups that operate on either side of it. Strengthening security along the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo involves, first, capacity-building for the Congolese security and defence forces. In this respect, Gabon would like the United Nations, as well as other multilateral and bilateral partners, to continue to support the Government in its efforts to reform this sector. We encourage and welcome the steps already taken by the Government to that end.

Secondly, improving the security situation will require ongoing involvement of the countries of the Great Lakes region in the search for a joint solution to the crisis. In this regard, strengthening cooperation among the countries of the subregion and the assistance of the international community are important preconditions for improving dialogue between the Congolese authorities and the various groups within the framework of political dialogue resulting from the Goma agreements of March 2009.

Thirdly, improvements to the security situation will not be effective without a genuine plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We would like to welcome the efforts in this area by the Congolese authorities, who to date have reintegrated around 32,000 ex-combatants in the armed forces and the national police force.

With regard to justice, we would also like to welcome the commitment of the Congolese authorities to the fight against impunity, as demonstrated by the legal proceedings taken against high-level officers of the armed forces and rebel leaders accused of rape. Beyond that, however, we should continue to support reform and the strengthening of the justice sector.

The Congolese situation is also political. It is crucial that the authority and sovereignty of the State be fully restored throughout all of the country's territory. The success of the upcoming general elections will contribute to consolidating the authority and legitimacy of the State. Furthermore, the Congolese political class overall wishes to see these elections take place.

To this end, the international community and the United Nations must provide the technical and logistical support necessary for the electoral process. At the conclusion of that process, the setting up of national reconciliation mechanisms and a strengthening of the democratic institutions of the rule of law, health and education, especially for young people, can only contribute to creating a more tranquil political climate.

The stabilization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the conduct of the elections will create an environment conducive to restoring economic and social activity. The macroeconomic initiatives and measures already undertaken by the authorities should be encouraged. That is why my delegation would like to endorse the Congolese Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Areas Emerging from Armed Conflict, whose interface with the international plan is the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy.

With respect to the issue of mines, Gabon welcomes the convening of the Lusaka Summit at the conclusion of which the countries of the Great Lakes endorsed the guidelines of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on tracing mineral resources, which is a very important achievement given the link between the financing of armed groups and the illicit exploitation of natural resources. In that regard, we would like to welcome the recent decision by the United States of America to provide $11 million to support actions to combat the illicit trade in mineral resources in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, at a time when we are thinking about the future of MONUSCO, the objective should be to enable the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to regain its authority throughout the country. The future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a matter for the Congolese people. The quest for peace should be the constant concern for the people, the Government and the international community. The international community must support the country in finding a lasting solution to the crisis and achieving lasting peacebuilding. Of course, the priorities are those that Minister Tshibanda has just shared with us, namely elections, security sector reform, justice, mineral resources, administration and economic reconstruction.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): Thank you, Mr. President, scheduling this important debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo today. I welcome the positive comments made this morning by the Secretary-General and Minister Raymond Tshibanda. I also appreciate the participation in this debate of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union.

This debate is an important opportunity to discuss the ways in which we can all assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its progress towards sustainable peace and security. I shall touch first on the short-term priority of the elections and then say something about the broader long-term challenges.

The forthcoming presidential and legislative elections mark a milestone in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and provide an opportunity to build on progress made during the past decade. It is important that these elections be based on the principle that every eligible adult has the right to vote, that they include the participation of civil society, human rights defenders and journalists, that they respect the freedom of expression and opinion and that they allow equitable access to media for the political parties. These elements are essential to a credible election process. We urge all political parties to commit to peaceful elections and we call on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the international community to continue to work with the Congolese Government and the National Independent Electoral Commission to ensure that the election process is successful.

Although elections are important, they cannot on their own provide the long-term stability that the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs. Therefore, we must look beyond the elections to the key challenges that affect the long-term security, stability and prosperity of the country. As Minister Tshibanda said, there have been important strategic successes, but the challenges remain daunting. In particular, it is vital that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo build confidence in the institutions of Government and provide the foundations for enhanced economic activity, including enabling the safe return of internally displaced persons to lead normal productive lives.

We urge the Congolese Government to share and implement its road map for defence reform and to work with MONUSCO and other international partners to drive forward the reform of the army and police. This approach must include strengthening military police and military justice institutions. I would highlight three key areas.

First, further efforts must be made to form a modern, effective national police force. We welcome the progress already made with support from MONUSCO towards establishing and training 10 police units in advance of the elections, and encourage international donors to support the equipping and training of additional police units. Their deployment will play a significant role in reassuring communities, and particularly the most vulnerable in those communities, such as women, and provide the foundation for re-establishing the rule of law and State authority in all territories.

Secondly, security will only be achieved if justice is seen to be done and lingering issues of impunity addressed. Some important steps have been taken, but we call on the Congolese Government to utilize the experience provided in the United Nations justice support programme to develop the criminal justice chain, the judiciary and the prisons and to adopt legislation to bring about the recommended reforms.

Thirdly, disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration are essential to bringing the conflict to an end and would help improve security conditions in fragile territories. The United Kingdom is a major financial contributor to the programme, and we call for greater support from the international community for this valuable activity.

Additionally, there are cross-border challenges to stability that will need to be addressed. MONUSCO has increased its efforts to protect civilians against attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, but we urge greater coordination of strategies with other United Nations missions in the region and with regional security forces.

The international community has an important role to play in helping to address the challenges that remain. We urge the United Nations to deliver a coordinated approach in-country and encourage the international community to support efforts that will facilitate the transfer of tasks from MONUSCO to United Nations agencies in support of building capacity within the Congolese Government as security conditions improve.

The United Kingdom remains a committed partner of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition to the United Kingdom's contributions towards the wide-ranging European Union development assistance programme and our United Nations contributions, we will provide $1.2 billion in bilateral funding over the next four years through our development programme with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Even in the current difficult financial circumstances, we believe that this investment is worth making for the long-term future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its people.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to welcome the Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Raymong Tshibanda, to today's meeting.

We believe that the process of settling the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has seen substantial positive progress. The prevailing relative stability throughout the country is evidence of the country's move towards a post-conflict reconstruction phase. At the same time, in the eastern provinces of the country, serious threats to security remain because of the activity of a number of armed groups.

The military capabilities of those groups remain fairly high. An alarming factor is the alliances created by Congolese and foreign rebels to achieve their goals and maintain their control of the illicit proceeds from mineral resources. We firmly condemn the punitive actions by the armed groups against the peaceful population, attacks on peacekeepers and the seizure of hostages, including those from humanitarian organizations, for ransom. We note that the number of human rights violations in those territories is not decreasing. Those crimes must not go unpunished.

It is quite obvious that resolving the issue of armed groups in the eastern part of the country will be possible only through a comprehensive and holistic approach, one involving a broad spectrum of political, economic, legal and military-political instruments. In that context we welcome the efforts by the Great Lakes countries to create joint mechanisms for border control and for managing and certifying the proceeds of mineral resources in the country, in particular

agreements of the special high-level meeting in Lusaka in December last year.

A key task is stepping up assistance to the Government of the country for security sector reform. Despite the Government's efforts, progress in this area remains limited. At the same time, the bottleneck in the process of integrating former combatants exacerbates problems within the regular armed forces. It is important to ensure full-fledged implementation of the agreements between the Government and the Congolese armed groups of 23 March 2009. Priorities here include the reconstruction and strengthening of institutions of State authority in areas freed from armed groups.

Resolving those issues is increasingly topical in the context of upcoming general elections, bearing in mind that preparations for their conduct are at the very forefront of political life in the country. This period might be marked by growing political and social tensions.

Undoubtedly, providing electoral support to the country by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is an important task. Such assistance must be provided on the request of the National Independent Electoral Commission in an unbiased way, strictly within the framework of the existing mandate. We welcome the development of dialogue and partnership relations between the Government of the Democratic Republic and the United Nations Mission to take stock together of the situation regarding prospects for the United Nations peacekeeping presence.

We note the Mission's adopting of a range of measures to enhance the effectiveness of the protection of the civilian population, which provides for an early warning mechanism in vulnerable regions and is intended to bolster the confidence of the peaceful population in its activities. Such steps are already yielding palpable positive results.

To uphold long-term stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community should focus its attention on assisting the Government to resolve issues related to peacebuilding. Of key importance in this regard is strengthening constructive cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region to resolve common transborder problems and development of economic cooperation.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): We would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for presiding over this meeting and to thank you and your delegation for organizing it. We thank the Secretary-General for his intervention, and we join other in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Raymond Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We further welcome the participation of the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

In 1960, during the celebration of the Congo's independence, the first democratically elected Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, declared, "We are going to rule not by the peace of guns and bayonets, but by the peace of heart and will." Later this year, more than 50 years after this vision was expressed, the Democratic Republic of the Congo will hold its third democratic elections, still in pursuance of that lofty goal.

Significant progress has been made in the past decade in improving the overall stability and security of the country. There has also been progress in improving the political climate, which has allowed for the extension of State authority throughout most of the country.

In spite of that progress, there remain challenges that require a concerted effort to address, especially the security situation in the east of the country and challenges relating to stabilization, peacebuilding and development. National ownership is crucial and should characterize efforts for peace consolidation, with the partnership and sustained support of the international community.

I shall turn to three issues that we identify as key for the consolidation of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: security and stability, governance and democratization, and socio-economic development.

The country's uneven stability, whereby the eastern part continues to experience instability, is a cause for concern. For the Democratic Republic to maintain its sovereignty, it is important that State authority be extended and exercised throughout the country.

It is our view that the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stablilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) should continue to focus on establishing stability and

security in the eastern part of the country, working together with Government forces. We welcome the fact that relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries of the Great Lakes region continue to improve. It is also important that countries of the region have committed to working together to comprehensively address the sources of threats to regional stability, including those posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Some progress has been made with regard to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration and to security sector reform. However, the process will have to be accelerated. Further, it is our view that the mandate of MONUSCO should be able to focus on a comprehensive programme to help develop capable and effective national security forces that will ultimately be responsible for peace and security in the country. MONUSCO's future role should complement the endeavour of the Democratic Republic to extend its State authority. It is important that MONUSCO's role adjust to new challenges of threats on the ground and the needs of the Congolese people.

Secondly, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has come a long way since the outbreak of the civil war a decade ago, a war that turned into a conflict that threatened regional peace and stability. It has now been more than five years since the people of the country chose ballots over guns and bullets, as envisaged by Patrice Lumumba. They have not looked back on their journey to democracy, peace and stability, justice and freedom.

South Africa is pleased that relative peace and security exist in the Democratic Republic of the Congo despite the challenges in the eastern part. The last parliamentary and presidential elections were a major breakthrough in the Congolese efforts towards democracy, good governance and nation-building. We are pleased that the Congolese will be returning to the polls again this year, in November, for the third time since independence. We are aware that the success of the last elections was in large part due to the commitment, resolve and focus of the international community and the United Nations. South Africa would therefore call on the international community not to forsake the people of the Congo as they approach their next important elections after a decade-long conflict.

South Africa would like to acknowledge to Government's commitment to commit significant resources to cover the total cost of the elections in November. We call on the international community to match that commitment and provide the financial assistance required to bridge the gap in the budget for the elections. MONUSCO's role in this regard will be critical. It should of necessity extend to working closely with the National Independent Electoral Commission.

It is the view of my delegation that the coming elections will be a watershed moment in the history of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and will go a long way in determining the country's future insofar as peace and stability and economic and social development is concerned. While elections are not an end but are rather a means toward an end, the Government of the Democratic Republic is encouraged to do everything within its modest means to ensure that the elections are a resounding success.

As we look to the issues of sustained socio-economic development — the third issue I wish to address — we are again encouraged to turn to the vision set out by Patrice Lumumba in 1960: "I call on all Congolese citizens to set themselves resolutely to the task of creating a prosperous national economy, which will address our economic independence."

In that regard, we are encouraged by the report of the International Monetary Fund that commended the strong micro-economic performance in 2010, including a growth rate of 7.2 per cent and annual inflation of 9.8 per cent. If sustained, that growth will translate into important social dividends for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Regional cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region is vital to stability and economic development. The newly created United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa can also play a facilitating role in regional cooperation. We welcome the Lusaka Declaration to fight illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region, adopted at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in December 2010. That effort will assist in improving regional cooperation among the countries of the Great Lakes region and is crucial to stability and economic development.

As part of the drive for sustainable socio-economic development in the country, the development

of strategies to manage natural resources will be critical. The lifting of the ban on mining activities in the Kivu and Maniema provinces this year should pave the way for job creation and a better life for all Congolese. In this regard, specific focus on youth unemployment remains a pressing concern.

In conclusion, we cannot but refer yet again to the words of that great African patriot and revolutionary Patrice Lumumba, who said that the independence of the Congo marks a decisive step towards the liberation of the entire African continent. His words remain true today and still reverberate on the continent. The resolution of the challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo would be a significant step towards the comprehensive resolution of all the challenges facing the continent. South Africa, for our part, remains committed to assisting the people and Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to consolidate peace, reconciliation, democracy and socio-economic development.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank France for its initiative to hold this meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We thank Secretary General Sellal for making a special trip to host today's meeting. We also welcome Mr. Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Allow me also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Tshibanda for their statements.

Over the years, under the leadership of President Kabila, the overall security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been stable, its economy has grown rather rapidly, incomes have been on the rise, living conditions have improved and regional cooperation has grown closer. We congratulate the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on those improvements and its tireless efforts towards those ends.

In November, the Democratic Republic of the Congo shall hold a general election that will be a milestone in the political life of the country; arduous work will be required to ensure its smooth conduct. At the same time, the country is faced with considerable challenges in maintaining stability and promoting economic development. The international community should continue to provide practical support to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I wish to take this opportunity to make the following points.

First, in regard to support for the preparations for the elections, the Government has made progress on election preparations. We call upon the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and international partners to continue to provide financial and logistical support at the request of the Government. We call on the parties concerned to respect the Constitution and laws of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the will of its people, and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the country so as to ensure that the general election will be conducted smoothly and lay a solid foundation for achieving national reconciliation and lasting peace.

Secondly, with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's achievement of sustained stability, the Government has achieved much in its joint military actions with its neighbours in the fight against such armed groups as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Lord's Resistance Army. However, some rebel activities continue in the eastern part of the country, and progress in reintegrating ex-combatants has been slow. The United Nations and the international community should continue to support the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its efforts to stabilize the situation in its country, provide it with training and equipment, and assist it in accelerating security sector reform and completing the expansion of the military and police forces.

MONUSCO has done a great deal of work to realize peace and stability in the country, for which we wish to express our appreciation and support. As to the future of the United Nations presence in the country, the United Nations should continue to listen to the opinion of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Lastly, regarding economic and social development, we call on the parties concerned to create a climate conducive to economic development, attract domestic and foreign investment, and help the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assume ownership of and actively explore its natural resources in order to turn its resource wealth to development advantage so that its people will be able to benefit from a peace dividend as soon as possible. At the same time,

we hope that the countries concerned will strengthen their cooperation and work with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its actions against the illegal exploitation of natural resources by the rebels.

Mr. Amieyeofori (Nigeria): Allow me to convey Nigeria's appreciation to the French presidency for convening this timely discussion on the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the country enters the critical stabilization phase. I join other delegations in thanking the Secretary-General for his informative briefing. My delegation welcomes the presence of Mr. Raymond Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for enriching our discussion with the perspectives of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also welcome the presence of the representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the European Union.

Nigeria welcomes the steady progress being achieved in the major sectors of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most of the country is now conflict-free, relations with neighbours have normalized, and economic and social reconstruction efforts are under way. That progress, however, is taking place in a fragile environment fraught with serious challenges. Insecurity is still rife in the eastern part of the country, with persistent threats from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Lord's Resistance Army, and violations of human rights, including sexual violence, are still evident in North and South Kivu provinces. The limited capacity of the Government to maintain nationwide security also remains an issue of great concern.

Considering the magnitude of those challenges, it is fitting that this debate was convened not least to demonstrate our shared belief that the challenges are surmountable if the right combination of military, political and institutional solutions are found. Nigeria therefore welcomes the Government's determination. We share its vision for consolidating its efforts, exercising full sovereignty within its territory and empowering national institutions.

With presidential and legislative elections on the horizon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is poised to enter an era of credible governance. In order not to lose the momentum that has gathered, it is important to ensure strict adherence to the electoral calendar. If executed well, the elections will pave the way for genuine national reconciliation and reintegration. We are certain that this goal can be realized with the unwavering support of the international community.

Without durable institutions, particularly in the security and judicial sectors, the fight against insecurity, impunity and human rights violations will be difficult to achieve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We therefore call on the international community, including the donor community and other development partners, to redouble their efforts in assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the areas of capacity-building, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and judicial sector reform. Such reforms are indispensable to strengthening the capacity of the Government to extend security across the county and to create a fertile economic environment for building the future of the country.

Recent economic achievements, including improved economic growth, reaching the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and increased Government revenue, are solid foundations for sustained peacebuilding.

The continued illegal exploitation of natural resources by armed groups and elements of the Congolese army, despite agreements on the establishment of a regional certification mechanism to curb it, remains a worrisome trend. Those activities exacerbate conflict and deprive the Government of valuable revenues that are critical to supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo's development priorities. The need to put an end to those activities cannot be overemphasized.

At the regional level, building on the rapprochement between the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, the opportunity exists for greater interaction and cooperation to tackle residual security problems.

As the Council discusses the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is our hope that due cognizance will be taken of two tensions inherent in the country, namely, a long history of resentment of external involvement in what are regarded as the internal affairs of the country, on the one hand, and a dogged determination to remain united as a single country despite all odds, on the other. The lesson we draw from this is that there is a need for national

ownership of development priorities and strategies, the coordination of aid and the need to respond to national priorities.

Let me conclude by expressing Nigeria's appreciation to the personnel of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) for their continuing support to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The proactive and robust nature of its activities, despite the reduction in troop strength, is particularly commendable. In this important phase in the life of the country, it is inevitable that MONUSCO aligns itself with the changes taking place and responds to the areas of greatest need in the country, including security, the protection of civilians, targeted support for the armed forces and the forthcoming elections. We must do all we can to support them in their efforts.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the French Mission for organizing this important debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as for the quality of the concept paper it prepared in that regard (S/2011/282, annex). I should also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Minister Raymond Tshibanda for their very useful contributions to this debate.

Almost a year to the day, the Security Council adopted resolution 1925 (2010), by which the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was succeeded by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The international community also expressed its support for the efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assume greater autonomy in managing its conflicts. For its part, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was able to associate this change with the fiftieth anniversary of its independence. MONUSCO is today active in numerous areas, in particular in the protection of civilians, disarmament and stabilization. It is also participating in the preparations being undertaken by the Independent National Electoral Commission for next November's election.

We would like to commend the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to bring peace to the country and strengthen State institutions. However, we must nevertheless emphasize that the tasks to be carried out are still onerous and the needs enormous in a country whose eastern part alone is larger than the entire territory of France.

The challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are numerous and complex, on both the humanitarian front as well as in the area of security. Combating the activities of armed groups requires working together more closely with Government forces, as well as increased support for the process of integrating militants, who must form part of the reform of the security sector. Moreover, the frequency and brutality of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army against the civilian populations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as of many of the countries of the region call for stepped up cooperation on the part of the States of the region.

The latest reports on rapes committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are exceedingly alarming. While the statistic of 15,000 rapes having taken place last year in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year was cited in this Chamber last October, current reports mention 400,000 — an average of 48 rapes per hour. This confirms the fears expressed by Ms. Wallström about the country's reputation being tarnished for being known as the rape capital of the world. The international community must respond firmly and in a concerted manner in the face of the scope of this tragedy. Rapes must end and the perpetrators of this heinous crime must face justice. Women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must suffer no longer and should take their full place in society.

The measures taken to resolve the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons should be encouraged, as should steps to limit infections and contain epidemics, including cholera and polio.

We must also underscore the close link that exists between stabilization and development. In that regard, it is crucial to support the economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through material assistance and concrete programmes.

In addition, we must demand an end to the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which would contribute to putting an end to violence.

The international community should continue to support the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in all the efforts being made to ensure

conditions for stability and prosperity in the country. MONUSCO should have all the necessary means to carry out its tasks, including helicopters and planes.

In conclusion, I should like to express the Mission of Lebanon's sincere condolences to the families of the 32 passengers aboard the plane that crashed tragically on 4 April. Our sympathies also go out to their friends and colleagues, MONUSCO, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely and important debate on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish to extend a most cordial welcome to Minister Raymond Tshibanda and to thank him for his statement, which we heard with great interest. It illustrated the significant progress made in several decisive areas, and it clearly reflects the commitment of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to tackle the challenges that still lie ahead. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

As a member of the European Union, Portugal naturally shares the position that will be later expressed by Mr. Pedro Serrano.

Allow me also to reiterate Portugal's condolences to the families, colleagues and friends of those who lost their lives in the recent plane crash while serving the United Nations and the international community.

Despite the substantial challenges that the Democratic Republic of the Congo faces, there is a positive structural trend that is essential to foster. To do so, it is critical to continue enhancing security and improving the protection of civilians. In that regard, we express our satisfaction with the stability achieved in the vast majority of the country and the progress towards the neutralization of foreign and other armed groups, namely through the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation.

The activity of armed groups remains an intolerable source of instability and violence in the Kivus and in Orientale province. It is at the root of continued violations of human rights.

We remain concerned with the recruitment and use of children. We call upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement the recommendations of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict.

We also remain concerned about the high number of cases of sexual violence against women and girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as mentioned by the Secretary-General. However, it is significant that the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have shown the political will to investigate the cases of sexual violence that led to the trial and conviction of officers of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo. We strongly support the fight against sexual violence and the defence of fundamental human rights. In that regard, I would like to pay special tribute to the efforts being developed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Wallström in this field.

The reform of the security sector and upholding the rule of law are essential to overcome those challenges. We therefore encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to pursue those processes in an integrated way, while closely coordinating with its international partners. Allow me to underline the role played by the European Union Mission of Assistance for Security Sector Reform, which is led by a Portuguese general.

The upcoming presidential and legislative elections will be a key moment in the stabilization and peace consolidation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I paid special attention to what Minister Tshibanda said on that important point. It seems to me that it is particularly important that the national authorities hold and keep up an enhanced dialogue with the opposition and the international community in order to ensure an environment that is conducive to a peaceful, free and fair electoral process. In this regard, I commend the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), both in technical and logistical terms, and underline the European Union's support to this process.

The fulfilment of the medium- and long-term expectations of the Congolese people depends on furthering institution-building and economic and social development. Only with legitimate, credible and resilient institutions will the State be able to discharge its functions. Only with economic and social development will the State be able to sustain peace.

Bearing in mind the decisive importance of national ownership, the primary responsibility for these endeavours rests naturally with the people and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But as we heard today, the international community stands ready to continue to work with the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this process. We welcome the enhanced dialogue and close cooperation between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO.

I would now like to focus on two key challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have a regional dimension and can only be addressed through effective regional cooperation. The first challenge is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which is responsible for intolerable humanitarian tragedy in Central Africa. We welcome the efforts of the African Union, namely the recent joint experts mission to LRA-affected regions. Moreover, we commend the Secretary-General for dispatching the multidisciplinary mission, which will soon visit the region to assess the LRA threat. We look forward to hearing its recommendations to strengthen and better coordinate United Nations and African Union efforts to help address this threat.

Secondly, the illegal exploitation and trafficking of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo fuels conflict and instability and deprives the Congolese people of the benefits of their country's assets. The results of the Lusaka Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region are encouraging. We welcome President Kabila's pledge to fight mercilessly against the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes Region, and we hope that it will soon bring about tangible results in a regional framework. In dealing with these and other threats, it is thus fundamental to further enhance regional cooperation and support the efforts of the African Union and subregional organizations. We hope that the work of the United Nations Office in Central Africa will also be instrumental in this regard.

(*spoke in French*)

I should like to address the Minister personally and recall the words of Dag Hammarskjöld: "the pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed or abandoned".

The United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have already come a long way together. This is a strategic partnership aimed at achieving peace and progress for the Congolese people and the stability of this vast region.

Portugal commends the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the progress achieved and encourages it to continue along this path despite the challenges it still faces. I have taken note of the appeal made by Minister Tshibanda and I wish to assure him of our unfailing support in the pursuit of the goals he mentioned, which we fully share.

Mr. Dunn (United States of America): Let me also thank the Government of France for hosting this important meeting on the stabilization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful statement, and Minister Tshibanda for his candid remarks.

The United States is committed to working with the Congolese Government and the international community towards our shared objective, namely, peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, in which the country plays such a substantial role. We support ongoing efforts to increase stability, reduce the insecurity in which too many civilians still live, and ensure legitimate governance and a strong, credible democratic process for the country's upcoming elections.

On behalf of the United States, let me again express our deep sorrow for the tragic United Nations air accident on 4 April, in which 32 individuals lost their lives. We offer our condolences and our lasting appreciation to Special Representative Meece, the men and women of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and all United Nations personnel who work with such dedication in challenging environments.

I will focus on three points today. First, for long-term stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take root, the country's civilians need and deserve greater security. We therefore commend MONUSCO for its efforts to implement its mandate fully, especially its innovative efforts to protect civilians. We applaud the development of a Mission-wide strategy, including the deployment of community alert networks and community liaison assistants. These important initiatives better connect peacekeepers with

communities at risk and enable MONUSCO, despite the all too real risks, to work quickly and effectively to respond to potential crises.

Important progress has been made. Much of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is relatively stable. Although important challenges remain in the east, security there has increased. The reduction of armed groups continues. Important efforts towards reintegration and disarmament have taken place. Nonetheless, insecurity persists in the east and northeast. State authority remains extremely weak and violent militias continue to fuel conflict. To take two troublesome examples, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda continue to kill, rape, abduct and displace civilians in shocking numbers. Armed entities, including elements of the State security forces, also illegally exploit the country's natural resources, terrorizing innocent civilians as part of their efforts to control communities that live near lucrative mining areas. That can allow them reap ill-gotten mining-related profits, which in turn sustain the conflict and prolong its suffering and abuses.

Far more must be done to deal with these violent armed groups. We remain committed to helping the Democratic Republic of the Congo address this scourge, in part through security-sector reform assistance. We have trained a light infantry battalion in Kisangani, which is now operating in areas victimized by the LRA. We provided ongoing support to develop more Congolese military-justice personnel and strengthen the country's military-justice system. We are also helping develop Congolese defence institutions.

Armed groups often rely on the mineral trade to sustain their operations. My Government is therefore actively working to enact regulations that will require companies publicly traded in the United States to ensure that their mineral purchases do not help violent groups. We call on all Member States to support resolution 1952 (2010) and urge companies within their jurisdictions to exercise due diligence over their supply of minerals that stoke conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are also working with companies, civil society groups and Governments in the region to ensure that the trade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's minerals does not help armed groups. We continue to partner with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region on these efforts, and we urge its Government to take steps to demilitarize the mines and reduce armed actors in the east of the country.

The second point I would like to address is the upcoming national and legislative elections. These could be historic. The Congolese will lead these elections, which we hope will be credible and fair. The Congolese can demonstrate their commitment as we approach the 28 November presidential and legislative elections.

Hurdles remain. A new electoral law has yet to be passed. The recently released electoral calendar is ambitious and it leaves scant room for error. The logistical challenges are substantial: Security remains a serious concern. In the past, members of the State security forces have abused and threatened journalists. Intimidation of domestic human rights defenders continues. MONUSCO may lose key mobility and air assets that could help the elections, just as they are needed most.

We therefore call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demonstrate the highest regard for the democratic process and to continue its work to ensure transparent, open and fair elections, with freedom of movement for all candidates and journalists. We will be closely monitoring developments in urban and rural areas alike, as the electoral process should be credible throughout the country. We will also provide approximately $11 million in electoral support, including election monitoring and civic education, in coordination with partners such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the Carter Center. We also support MONUSCO's efforts to improve the elections' technical and logistical aspects, as well as Radio Okapi's work to help cover these elections.

While the international community plays an important role supporting the electoral process, ultimately it is the Congolese Government's responsibility to provide the necessary support and security. We look forward to working with the Government in this regard.

Thirdly, let me underscore the importance of longer-term stabilization for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours. True progress will depend on tackling the underlying causes of insecurity and impunity in order to build the institutions that can support good governance.

The conviction of nine military personnel for having ordered and carried out mass rapes in Fizi is a milestone. By taking action, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has strengthened the message to perpetrators of sexual violence: no one is immune from prosecution.

The United States is deeply committed to ending impunity and developing democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including initiatives to support free speech, governance, the rule of law, judicial independence and accountability. For example, we have helped build up the Congolese justice system's forensic capacity to investigate mass killings and sexual and gender-based violence. That has made it easier to prosecute dozens of rapists and perpetrators of sexual violence. We have also allocated more than $2 million in new communications technologies to better protect civilians in the Kivu provinces through early-warning mechanisms and to support joint field investigations in the east by United Nations and Congolese military prosecutors.

The United States, working with the strategies of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government and the United States, has developed a comprehensive approach to help tackle sexual and gender-based violence. That includes $42 million in the Kivus and in Orientale and Maniema provinces to prevent future violence and take better care of survivors, as well as a three-year, $15 million initiative to scale up programmes to fight HIV/AIDS.

We continue to strengthen the Congolese civilian and military justice systems through long-term capacity-building and efforts to reduce impunity.

In conclusion, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must continue to take concrete steps to address the full spectrum of challenges the country faces. As Council members, we must also provide our political support to peace and stabilization. The United States is committed to doing so and to working with the Congolese Government and the international community towards our common objective of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on having convened and presiding over this important meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I should like also to express particular appreciation for the statement made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as well as for the presence of and the statement made by Mr. Raymond Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The proposal to focus our discussions today on the gradual stabilization of the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and identify key areas to that end has led us to reflect on the immediate tasks that we must accomplish without losing sight of our main objective. Those tasks include helping and cooperating with the authorities and institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the fulfilment of its fundamental responsibility to provide security to its people; leading the peacebuilding process; and establishing a peaceful society in which the human rights of all Congolese are respected and promoted, with a view to laying the foundation for long-term, sustainable development.

Over the past 15 years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has faced difficulties of a unique nature and of a magnitude such that it is difficult to find examples in the international community that can serve as references or enable us to gauge the extent of the challenges that have been overcome by the country's Government, institutions and society as a whole. That is why Colombia welcomes the progress made so far and the good relations that prevail between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations, whose contribution and cooperation are essential.

While much work remains to be done in the process of stabilization and peacebuilding, the concept paper prepared by France clearly identifies and defines the priority areas on which we must focus our actions. The security situation, especially in the eastern provinces and in North and South Kivu, is of particular concern. The fight against armed groups must be carried out in parallel with security sector reform, offering comprehensive solutions that take account of the political, legal, economic and human rights dimensions, as well as of individual responsibilities in the area of justice and the cross-border presence of certain armed groups.

That will require a full assessment of the process of the reintegration of former combatants of the Forces

armées de la République démocratique du Congo, which will serve as the basis for a dialogue with all stakeholders and which will lead to the adoption of corrective measures aimed at enabling the legitimate authorities to exert full control over all components of the armed forces.

Army and police reform must be promoted through the adoption and implementation of the necessary legislation, along with training and the establishment of institutional structures that reflect the clear subordination of the armed forces to the civil authorities.

The successful outcome of the elections of 2011 and 2012 is of paramount importance for the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The participation of the United Nations in particular and of the international community in general in the upcoming elections should therefore be based on the recognition of the ownership and responsibility of the Congolese authorities and institutions with respect to the entire electoral process.

Legislative, institutional and logistical measures to ensure the holding of peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections must be carried out in a peaceful political environment that is orderly and promotes productive discussions and in which all political actors enjoy their full rights. In that regard, civic education for the people is of fundamental importance. A continuous, fluid dialogue with the National Independent Electoral Commission is crucial in order to identify specific areas where assistance may be required. Here we call upon the donor community to honour its commitments in financing the upcoming elections. The Government, by funding 60 per cent — as Minister Tshibanda has just told us — is doing its part and shouldering its responsibility.

The consolidation of democratic institutions and State authority throughout the territory will be possible only through the adoption of measures that take account of the interdependency of issues related to security, institutional capacity, the promotion and protection of human rights, and development.

In that context, it is particularly important to combat violations of human rights and all types of violence, including sexual violence. This has been one of the most extreme cases that the Security Council has dealt with, as a number of my colleagues have stated. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the strong support of the international community, must continue to take actions such as the trial and conviction of Lieutenant Colonel Kibibi and 10 other officers, because the prosecution of those held responsible is an essential element in preventing this type of situation and promotes the development of national capacities to reduce impunity and strengthen institutional legitimacy.

The stabilization process will be successful only if it takes place in the context of broader actions aimed at developing the country's productive potential.

It is important that the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue its fight against the illegal export of natural resources and that it implement the decisions taken at the Lusaka summit, as this will contribute to the full utilization of its natural resources as an engine for development and the welfare of its people.

Finally, allow me to wish every success to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the preparations for and holding of the upcoming elections, so that a solid, democratic foundation can be laid that will ensure peaceful coexistence and prosperity in the country.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): I should like to thank the French presidency of the Security Council for having organized this timely debate. I should like also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Minister Tshibanda for their comprehensive briefings. The issues that they raised and the approach they suggested should guide us in today's deliberations. We hope that today's debate will determine the contours of the international community's approach to sustaining the progress made so far in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I would like to join others in expressing our deepest regret over the tragic crash of an airplane contracted to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) on 4 April in Kinshasa, which resulted in the loss of 33 passengers and crew members, including United Nations staff. We express our heartfelt condolences to those who lost their loved ones, colleagues and friends.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is witnessing a critical period in its history. The progress achieved so far in restoring peace and stability needs to be consolidated by entrenching democratic values,

focusing on improving security and the rule of law, and adopting policies conducive to the overall economic development of the country. The challenges are indeed difficult, but not insurmountable.

The holding of credible elections this year would go a long way towards sustaining stability in the country. We hope that the elections will be held according to the timetable in a free and fair manner. The National Independent Electoral Commission has already started work on voter registration, consultations with opposition parties and a code of conduct. Civil society, the media and non-governmental organizations should support the Commission in creating awareness among the population.

India, as the largest democracy in the world, strongly believes in the importance of creating effective, representative, democratic institutions to address the problems of society. The international community, including the United Nations and MONUSCO, should help the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in conducting the elections.

Long-term peace and stability cannot be sustained without security, which can be ensured only by the effective enforcement of the rule of law. Today, most parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo except the eastern region are free of the conflict that the country endured during the civil war. The presence of armed groups in the eastern provinces of the Kivus, Maniema and Katanga pose a serious threat to the existence of State authorities and their capacity to protect civilians. Unabated acts of violence by elements of armed groups, such as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, the Forces nationales de liberation and the Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba, are a matter of serious concern. The situation has been further aggravated by human rights violations and sexual violence committed by elements of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo. The involvement of various armed groups, including some elements of the security forces, in illegal mining is also worrisome. Furthermore, the menace of the Lord's Resistance Army is not limited to Orientale province, but is affecting the entire region. We are also gravely concerned over the precarious humanitarian situation.

The focus should therefore be on the effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of various armed groups. The success achieved so far in the DDR process should be sustained, and issues of impunity dealt with. We are glad to note that the reforms in the security, police and justice sectors — starting with training and sensitization to human rights issues, effective prosecution and expeditious judicial process — are indeed priorities for the Government.

Security and law-and-order issues are intrinsically linked to economic development. It is now time for the international community to look beyond peacekeeping and to help the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in their peacebuilding efforts, including investments in agriculture, infrastructure and industry, towards overall economic development.

MONUSCO peacekeepers have been doing commendable work in the most difficult circumstances. The soldier-to-population and soldier-to-land-area ratios are extremely low in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where MONUSCO is largely deployed. There is an urgent need for the Council to address the issue of resource gaps for MONUSCO, because security, the rule of law, institution-building and effective governance are processes that will have to be pursued simultaneously by the Mission. An integrated approach incorporating these objectives requires the cooperation of all stakeholders and the provision of adequate resources by the international community.

India has had a long association with the Democratic Republic of the Congo as one of the major troop-contributing countries over the past five decades. Our first presence in the country dates as far back as March 1961 during the crisis in Katanga province. Currently, our contribution to MONUSCO stands at 4,318 troops. Keeping in mind the resource gap in MONUSCO, we extended the service of our six utility helicopters until April this year. We continue to extend the services of four combat helicopters beyond the commitment period.

The Indian contingent has made significant contributions to the humanitarian and development activities in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including building and rehabilitating community centres and vocational training schools, as well as setting up laboratories for information

technology training and building markets. In the course of India's involvement in peacekeeping operations in the Congo, 36 of our soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice.

In addition to its contribution to MONUSCO, India has also cooperated with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in development programmes. We have lines of credit worth $318 million for such projects as power generation, railways, rural water supply and the supply of buses. We have also offered to set up an information technology centre of excellence and three learning stations under the Hole-in-the-Wall computer education project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. India offers 70 training slots for short- and medium-term technical courses, and 10 slots for longer-term professional courses. The two countries are cooperating in building low-cost housing.

India remains committed to playing its part in supporting the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in strengthening and building the capacities of its national institutions in the security and civilian areas.

Mr. Wittig (Germany) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Sir, for having organized this important debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(*spoke in English*)

I thank the Secretary-General for his very informative and helpful briefing, and I would like to warmly welcome His Excellency the Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The briefings we have heard and the French concept paper (see S/2011/282) have set the stage for our discussions. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has evolved and progress has been achieved over the past decade. However, serious challenges remain, notably in the eastern part of the country.

Taking into account the long-standing presence of the United Nations and the involvement of the international community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the key questions are how to pursue our policy now that the country is entering the stabilization phase and preparing for an inclusive electoral cycle. What kind of division of labour and of responsibilities between the various actors should be adopted? More specifically, how should the focus and structure of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) be defined to complement and support the primary role of the Congolese Government in peace consolidation? The priorities should centre around four basic pillars: security, governance, elections and socio-economic development. These pillars are also reflected in the benchmarks set by resolution 1925 (2010) for future reconfigurations of MONUSCO. Let me highlight some specific aspects of particular concern to us in these four areas.

First is security. The current political and military situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo does not correspond to a stabilization phase. Civilians suffer extreme violence, including sexual violence, mostly affecting women and children. The violence and potential insecurity arise from a number of sources, one of which is the remaining presence of Congolese and foreign armed groups such as the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Lord's Resistance Army. We encourage all actors to engage in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and related processes to vigorously pursue those efforts.

Another paramount challenge is, of course, the reform of all components of the security sector. Concerning the army, a real integration of the former members of armed groups, such as the former Congrès national pour la défense du peuple, into the Congolese army is necessary. There will be little progress in security sector reform if those processes are not effectively completed.

How can we overcome the limited progress achieved so far in the decisive area of stabilization? International support is needed, and it is provided, for example, through the two European Union (EU) missions: EUSEC, the European Union mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and EUPOL, the European Union police mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Among other objectives, the two missions work to secure the chain of payments of the Congolese armed forces. We need better coordination among the international actors. The international community should also play a greater role in improving the capacity of the police and the justice system.

The most important component, however, is the political will and determination of Congolese actors to address core security issues: disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, fighting impunity, protecting civilians and control over natural resources by armed groups or armed forces. Taking into account the regional dimension of the security threats, the political will of regional actors is also imperative. The same holds true for the support provided by the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations.

Secondly, I would like to turn to the issues of governance and human rights. The lack of Government capacity is of particular importance when considering the issues of civilian protection and, specifically, preventing the use of child soldiers. Child exploitation is illegal under the Congolese Constitution and is prohibited under various other legal acts. Despite such provisions, the practice of using child soldiers remains a problem. Therefore, I want to appeal to the Congolese Government — also in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict — to implement an action plan to halt the recruitment and use of children. Looking at human rights from a broader perspective, we are convinced that the Congolese Government could benefit from the advice of an independent expert of the Human Rights Council.

Thirdly, with regard to the electoral process, the upcoming elections represent an important opportunity to make substantial strides in the political stabilization process. The elections are essential to the future legitimacy of the Congolese Government. They need to be conducted in a timely manner and to be inclusive, transparent, credible, peaceful and secure. A peaceful environment allowing for adequate democratic space is a prerequisite for the elections. The primary responsibility for the elections lies with the Congolese Government. We appeal to the Government and all Congolese stakeholders to fulfil their responsibilities in the electoral process.

Finally, endemic poverty, lack of employment for demobilized combatants and youth, and competition for economic resources are potential sources of tension and violence. It is therefore crucial to lay the foundation for long-term economic development in the peacebuilding and stabilization processes. The AU and relevant subregional organizations have an increasing role to play. We should support the development of their capacities. Germany remains engaged in that field. We consider regional cooperation and integration to be vital. Therefore, we would like to encourage the Great Lakes countries and all relevant organizations to actively engage in that process.

Furthermore, an effective and legal mining industry, operating in accordance with the principles of good governance, is key for the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The country's natural wealth must benefit its people. The illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources, which is fuelling the conflict, in particular in the Kivus, must be brought to an end. My country is engaged in fighting the illicit exploitation of and trade in natural resources and supports a mineral certification system, which will strengthen the legal mining industry and thus the development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Arriving at a sustainable solution will require the will of the Congolese Government, targeted resources from donors and strategic cooperation among all relevant actors, notably with the United Nations and MONUSCO. My country is willing to work the Congolese Government and the United Nations to that end.

Finally, allow me to express my gratitude to the French delegation for their leadership in organizing today's debate and for preparing the draft presidential statement, which we fully support.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the French delegation for having organized today's very timely debate. I wish to also thank the Secretary-General and Minister Raymond Tshibanda for their statements.

(*spoke in English*)

Through Minister Tshibanda, I would like to commend the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the notable progress made over the past few years. Security and stability have improved as the Government has progressively achieved greater control over its territory and enhanced its relations with the countries of the region. Nevertheless, as has been noted by previous speakers, challenges remain, particularly in the east, where rebel groups still pose a serious threat to the civilian population. The persistence of cases of sexual violence and the recruitment of children is of special concern.

We welcome the very clear vision that Minister Tshibanda has expressed concerning his country's priorities for the near future. They deserve our full support.

The elections to be held in November will be an important milestone in the consolidation of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All of us expect the polls to be free, fair and transparent, and to thus contribute to strong democratic institutions and to serve as a sound basis for social and economic development. We trust that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and bilateral partners will do their best to meet the country's request for assistance. Brazil stands ready to participate in that effort.

Sustainable progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will require the strengthening of institutions and national capacities. In that regard, we welcome the Government's development of a peace consolidation programme, with the support of MONUSCO. We also welcome its integrated approach, which stresses the importance of the three pillars: justice and the rule of law, security sector reform, and economic recovery and access to basic social services. We encourage MONUSCO, with the participation of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to fully support that strategy.

We take this opportunity to welcome the constructive dialogue between the United Nations and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The joint assessment process has proven to be a useful tool and has provided for excellent communication with the local authorities.

As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would also like to commend the cooperation between the Government and the Committee's Group of Experts. That dialogue was particularly important for the development of guidelines on due diligence so as reinforce the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources. On that issue and regarding other challenges faced by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is important to underscore the role that regional cooperation can play.

Brazil remains a committed partner in support of peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Last November, we donated $1 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to finance projects designed to assist victims of sexual violence. Brazil stands ready to deepen its bilateral cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We look forward to Minister Tshibanda's upcoming visit to Brazil and hope that it will lead to the further development of our bilateral ties. We are confident that, with the support of the international community, the Congolese people will be able to achieve long-term peace, democracy and socio-economic development.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the delegation of France for initiating this important discussion. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his insightful briefing. We welcome the participation of the Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Raymond Tshibanda.

Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the progress that has been made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and commends the Government on its efforts to provide security to the population and establish the infrastructure required for development. However, more progress is needed in many areas, including extending and strengthening the rule of law, reinforcing legitimate State authority and providing services to the population. Building the capacity of State institutions, including the security sector, justice, local administration, education and social services, is a vital element in restoring peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in its eastern sector. To that end, it is imperative that the country's Government, with the support of international stakeholders, intensifies its efforts to establish and strengthen effective State authorities, particularly at the local level.

We firmly believe that security sector reform and the strengthening of security forces require a strong commitment on the part of all stakeholders, including the Government, the United Nations and international partners. Reform of the national army and police is not only a precondition for consolidating peace, it is also one of the basic elements of long-term stability and the effective protection of civilians.

The general elections to be held in November constitute an opportunity for the Democratic Republic

of the Congo to ensure stability and strengthen its domestic institutions. In that regard, it is essential that the electoral process be conducted in a secure environment and a democratic and transparent manner. It is vital that the United Nations, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and international partners provide assistance to the national authorities in holding free, fair and credible elections.

The security situation in the eastern part of the country is still fragile. Congolese and foreign armed groups continue to have a serious impact on the security situation, as well as on the local population and their human rights. It is important that the Government, with support from MONUSCO, continue activities that neutralize armed groups, while the international community must bring pressure to bear on armed groups, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, through strict implementation of the relevant sanctions regime. Concerning the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), we welcome the African Union's efforts to define steps designed to protect civilians and diminish the capacity of the LRA. We also stress the importance of continued coordination between peacekeeping missions and the Governments of countries in the region in order to address the challenges posed by the LRA.

We are concerned that a number of human rights violations have been committed by elements of the national security forces. We reiterate our firm belief that the perpetrators of crimes against civilians must be brought to justice. We welcome the steps taken by the Government and the judicial authorities to bring to justice those responsible for crimes committed against civilians. Furthermore, every crime committed by elements of the national security forces must be properly addressed. Only security forces that enjoy the trust and respect of the civilian population can fully exercise their constitutional role and contribute to the protection of human rights.

Since its establishment, the United Nations Mission has played a significant role in ensuring peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as in protecting civilians. We fully support MONUSCO's continued efforts to strengthen the protection of the civilian population. We welcome its more robust posture and its efforts to develop and implement new approaches to the protection of civilians. By the same token, close cooperation between the Government and MONUSCO is crucial in dealing with the root causes of insecurity in the eastern part of the country.

Regional cooperation and relations among countries of the Great Lakes region represent a key factor for lasting stabilization of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are encouraged by regional cooperation aimed at combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources, bearing in mind that this issue is not only related to the economy but also has a security and stability dimension. Effective cooperation on the matter at regional and international levels would significantly contribute to reducing the scope for activities of illegal armed groups.

Despite its thorny history and many challenges, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made significant progress in recent years. We are convinced that, with the support of the international community, it will continue to advance on its path towards stability and economic development.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I too would like to warmly thank the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for accepting our invitation. I also thank the Secretary-General and the representatives of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union for their participation in this debate.

I should like to emphasize three elements in my statement today. The first is the importance of a strategic dialogue between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations. At a time when that country is entering a stage of progressive stabilization, this discussion affords us a valuable opportunity to take stock together of the actions taken so far and to analyse the challenges to come. Today's debate is thus part of a process of dialogue that should continue, both in New York and on the ground. In that regard, I welcome the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Roger Meece.

Secondly, this dialogue is all the more necessary in view of the fact that the Congolese are preparing elections at all levels, as Minister Tshibanda discussed earlier. This is an essential stage in the country's democratic transformation. As a number of members of

the Council said this morning, the organization of the electoral process is a major challenge that requires special vigilance in order to ensure that the elections will serve to consolidate peace in the country. France will pay particular attention to the conditions under which the elections will be organized. They should be free, transparent, peaceful and credible. We would like the United Nations and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to lend all possible support to the process, which means backing the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission. The first and most pressing challenge is registering all the voters. Earlier, Minister Tshibanda presented us with a timeline for the organization of the elections, which we welcome and will seek to see implemented. France is ready to support the process fully. We are committed to working side by side with the United Nations and the Congolese authorities in order to set up two police battalions for rapid response. We call on other partners to contribute to training the Congolese police.

Finally, we are aware that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains precarious. There are four particularly pressing challenges, namely, neutralizing the activities of armed groups in the east; setting up effective security forces; improving the mining sector and the exploitation of natural resources; and ensuring the protection of civilians, particularly against sexual violence, and strengthening the fight against impunity.

In conclusion, the international community, which for a long time has been committed to improving security in the region, is ready to back the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We require a clear commitment on the country's behalf on how it intends to continue with its democratic transformation, such that together we will be in a position to build a partnership of trust.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, who will speak on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme.

Mr. Gettu: We thank the French Ambassador and his delegation for taking the lead in organizing this *discussion. On behalf of the* United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo today is a different country from what it was 10 years ago. There are many positive changes there, as well as some persistent challenges. The Government has made good progress in improving the overall security situation in most parts of the country. In this, it has benefited from the support of the international community, including through the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Progress has also been made on democratic governance. Since the 2006 election, efforts have helped to strengthen the legislative branch, including expanding the oversight capacity of the national Parliament. On the economic front, important reforms have been undertaken, contributing to higher growth rates in recent years.

Major challenges remain, however, and it is critical that we recognize this and orient ourselves and our efforts to addressing them. To consolidate peace and security, for example, effective institutions and governance systems, including at the local level, are needed. Managing conflict, reducing community tensions and delivering basic services are also critical. If this to work, state authority need to be more effective and extended throughout the country.

For its part, UNDP is committed to continuing its assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the overall objective of expanding the opportunities and capabilities of the Congolese people and enabling them to improve their own lives and those of their families and communities. To that end, UNDP supports efforts in all four of the following areas: security and stabilization, electoral processes, governance and institution-building, and economic development.

Following the request of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February 2010 and the adoption of resolution 1925 (2010) in May 2010, it remains critical to advance security and stabilization by addressing the drivers of conflict throughout the country, including in the western provinces. To do this, the United Nations, including UNDP, the World Bank and several key partners are supporting the formulation of a new peace consolidation programme. This will complement the stabilization programme already under way in the

eastern region, the Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan in Conflict-Affected Areas of Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (STAREC), UNDP is supporting STAREC to achieve its objectives, including to restore and strengthen State authority, to facilitate return, reintegration and recovery and to combat sexual violence.

With regard to the electoral process, it is clear that this year's presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 28 November will present the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a major test. Successful elections will be critical to sustaining stability and peace and opening new opportunities to advance human development. The Government's ownership is commendable. Its commitment to financing 60 per cent of the overall budget for the electoral cycle 2007-2013, compared to 10 per cent in 2006, represents a significant advance.

The international community, including MONUSCO, the United Nations and UNDP, are helping, including through technical and capacity development support to the new Independent National Electoral Commission. Meeting the June deadline for voter registration will be challenging and require concerted effort. The timely adoption of the new electoral law is also needed to comply with the electoral calendar.

The Independent National Electoral Commission, MONUSCO and UNDP will continue to collaborate and help facilitate fair and credible elections. UNDP stands ready to support provincial and local elections in 2012 and 2013. We also recognize that such support is not just about election day, and UNDP will work throughout the electoral cycle to strengthen the institutions needed to make elections fair and ultimately meaningful, including with respect to human rights, the rule of law and the participation of all political parties.

In terms of economic development, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made important progress in maintaining macroeconomic stability and increasing pro-poor expenditures. To sustain high growth rates and ensure that the benefits of growth reach poor and rural populations and the marginalized, economic and human development initiatives must be expanded, along with the consolidation of peace and security at both the central and local levels.

To be effective, decentralization, including the free and fair elections of local leaders and the transfer of resources to legitimate decentralized entities, will be critical. Efforts must also be taken to grow and enable a vibrant and job-intensive private sector. The Government can help by establishing a transparent and conducive business environment, removing bureaucratic barriers and developing the competencies of its civil administration. Social protection systems can be a good and affordable investment in stability, protecting the most vulnerable and building resilience against economic shocks and downturns. The effective management of the country's rich endowment of natural resources will also require further attention from the Government.

The year 2011 is critical for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Progress is needed on all fronts. Luckily, the objectives are mutually supporting. Successful general elections can help sustain and accelerate development progress, as well as the consolidation of peace and security. Expanding security and State legitimacy can help make development initiatives possible and effective. Empowering women, including by ending sexual violence, is not just an important objective in itself, but also a critical investment with multiple proven development benefits. Development progress, in turn, is critical to generating the jobs and opportunities that can lead ex-combatants away from violence and conflict.

A secure and sustainably developing Democratic Republic of the Congo will, in turn, contribute to a stable and developing Great Lakes region and a more peaceful Africa. To realize this objective, the sustained engagement of international partners is essential, and the political will and initiative of the Government will be critical. UNDP looks forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership with the Government — which we view positively — the international community and the rest of the United Nations system, to simultaneously advance security and human development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, making 2011 a benchmark year in the lives of its citizens.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Colin Bruce of the World Bank.

Mr. Bruce (World Bank): We at the World Bank are deeply honoured to be able to participate in this

discussion. We identify with many of the statements that have been made already, but wish to briefly add six points.

First, we would like to confirm that the evidence indicates that peace and improvements in security have yielded economic benefits. During the period from 1996 to 2000, the years of war, for example, gross domestic product (GDP) actually contracted by about 4 per cent. In the period since then, we have seen GDP not only in positive terrain, but increasing. As recently as 2010, the GDP growth figure was about 5 to 6 per cent. So we see continued improvement. Underlying that is good news about improvements in agriculture and improvements at the top, if you like, of the hierarchy in terms of large companies. We see improvements in education and health outcomes, albeit from a low base, and we see improving results in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Having said that, we will soon be releasing a report that points to areas of concern in terms of the dividends of peace, and I would like to highlight one in particular, which is what we call the "missing middle". The small and medium-sized enterprises sector, which we know is very much involved in creating jobs globally, is an area that requires attention. That is my first point.

Secondly, I would like to embrace what many participants have said about the importance of institutional development. This year, for the first time, the World Bank released the *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*. In the report, we saw that countries that were able to develop strong institutions were able to avoid repeated cycles of war, which were quite pervasive in many African countries. But what we also saw was that countries that failed to do so — that were involved in the abuse of human rights and where there was low Government effectiveness — were 30 to 40 per cent more likely to slip back into violence. So we want to encourage the progress that we have already seen and ask the Government to stay the course.

My third point, which is a very interesting one to us, is that this institutional development that we have been talking about is something that takes a long time. Our estimates of the 20 best-performing countries shows that the 20 fastest of them took 17 years to get the military out of politics, 20 years to achieve functioning bureaucratic quality, and 27 years to bring corruption under reasonable control. The message of those findings is that that takes time. It is a generational effort and it is important that all of us stay the course.

My fourth point is not only to embrace what many Council members have said about the importance of fair and timely elections, but also to identify two particular risks that have not been mentioned so far. We know from experience across Africa and elsewhere that elections are often associated with deterioration in economic governance, and we want to encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic to buck that trend, so to speak, and to continue the course of fiscal discipline.

The second related risk that we see, particularly in this context, is that if current trends in food prices and oil prices are anything to go by, when the elections are held we could be facing a situation where there is considerable pressure in places like Kinshasa, where we are seeing cereal prices rising quite substantially. For example, whereas inflation during 2010 was about 10 per cent, we have already noted that prices have risen over 16 per cent in the first quarter of 2011. Cereal prices, in particular, have risen 33 per cent. That is worth watching as a complicating factor as we approach the elections.

My fifth point is to underscore what others have said about gender violence and to stand squarely with those who are challenging the Government to do more. Here, I also want to associate the World Bank with the comments made by my colleague from the United Nations Development Programme, which point to other actions that the Government can take to help to reduce gender disparity. We know, for example, that there are some laws that limit what women can do without their husband's permission in terms of routine legal processes. We would argue that such measures and laws are standing in the way of progress in the area of gender equality.

My final point, which is implicit in all that I have said so far, is that the kind of engagement that many speakers have referred to in their statements and that the World Bank embraces is one that needs to stay the course for the long haul. I just want to assure the Council that the World Bank, as well as the Africa region that I represent, are strongly committed to that long-term process. Right now, we have a portfolio of about $2.2 billion. Together with many members of the

Council, we are providing support to the processes of institution-building. We are focused very much on providing basic services, including access to electricity, education and health outcomes. We are very much involved — together with many Council members — in the work on governance. Only recently, we began to activate a project that will support improvements in governance in the mining sector. I spoke earlier about our concern about rising food prices, particularly in the context of elections. I would point out that we have an operation that is a social action fund of about $100 million, which will be very helpful in assisting Congolese in dealing with some of these food price increases.

We are there for the long haul. We welcome this discourse. We hope that everyone will also stay focused on the longer-term issues and the longer-term engagement.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Acting Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Mr. Serrano (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I thank you for having organized this strategic debate on the Democratic Republic of Congo and for inviting the European Union to brief the Council on its views. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing and for the message that he has conveyed, which the European Union (EU) supports.

The European Union's engagement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is based on two axioms: the importance of local ownership and the need to ensure a coordinated international effort with the United Nations at its core.

Progress in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be achieved only if Congolese political leadership is fully engaged. Since the conflicts of the 1990s, the Congolese authorities have shown their commitment to working with the international community, including the European Union, towards the stabilization of their country. I welcome the participation at today's meeting of Mr. Raymond Tshibanda, Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and thank him for his important message. In his presence, I wish to reiterate the European Union's engagement in support of peace and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo require the full involvement of the international community. Today, the United Nations lies at the heart of this effort. The European Union will continue to support United Nations activities, including the essential security role played by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in the stabilization process.

Allow me to outline three challenges that lie at the heart of the strategic relationship that the European Union is building with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and with the region.

The first challenge regards the strengthening of an open, democratic political system in the Democratic Republic. Progress in this area was the centrepiece of the political transition in 2006. The Congolese people, with the support of the international community, have made great efforts to set up democratic institutions. These efforts need to be continued.

The European Union, which was the leading donor to the electoral process in 2006, will remain engaged. Working with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EU will pursue a three-pronged approach: a financial contribution of €47.5 million; support of Congolese and international efforts to secure the elections, in particular through the purchase of communications equipment for the Kinshasa police; and a possible European Union electoral observation mission. The European Union will also make a special effort to support dialogue among all Congolese stakeholders, including civil society, before and during the elections process.

The second challenge lies within the crucial area of governance. In its partnership with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EU has prioritized security sector governance — defence, police and justice. Security sector reform must be the backbone of lasting peace and stability in the country.

Two European Union missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — the European Union Mission of Assistance for Security Sector Reform (EUSEC) and the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) — assist and advise the Congolese Government in the reform and reconstruction of the army and the police. These two missions operate in close coordination with the United Nations and other relevant international actors.

EUSEC is comprised of some 50 staff, mostly military. The mission provides advice and assistance to the Congolese authorities in the defence sector. It focuses, inter alia, on human resources, logistics management and officer training. EUPOL is a police mission headquartered in Kinshasa, with a field office in Goma. It consists of some 50 experts in the areas of police, justice, human rights and gender equality, including specialists on combating impunity and sexual violence.

As indicated by the Secretary-General and other speakers, the fight against sexual violence is indeed one of the greatest concerns of the international community with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Strengthening security sector reform in the country is therefore more important than ever. Appropriate legislation is currently being drafted, but much work remains to be done. A comprehensive approach addressing the political and technical constraints that the Democratic Republic is facing is crucial and should be continued, including during the upcoming electoral period. With regard to the justice sector, where the European Commission is one of the main donors, a reform plan has been set up, but for the time being the ministry in charge lacks the capacity to meet its objectives.

The third challenge relates to the economy. We acknowledge recent positive developments in the macroeconomic policies carried out by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nevertheless, further efforts are necessary in order to ensure economic progress, which is a key factor for sustainable stabilization.

The European Union is contributing approximately €634 million to development in the Democratic Republic under the European Development Fund for the period 2008-2013. An additional €40 million per year are being provided as humanitarian assistance. These amounts constitute some 25 per cent of the total contribution made by the European Union when the bilateral contributions made by its member States are considered. The aim is to support the reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo while pursuing stabilization efforts in some regions of the country. the Focus is on physical rebuilding, in particular on transport infrastructure, as well as on the reconstruction of the State through the strengthening of good governance. In addition, the European Union supports public health and environmental protection activities.

Success in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will also depend on sustaining the improved regional context. The European Union has made considerable political and diplomatic efforts by contributing to resolving regional crises and promoting greater cooperation between former belligerents. Today's cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its eastern neighbours is reshaping regional dynamics and creating renewed opportunities for peace and economic growth. It is also a prerequisite for addressing the remaining regional conflicts, in particular in the Kivu provinces, where non-Congolese armed rebel groups still pose a significant threat.

With that in mind, the European Union is supporting the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, a regional organization comprised of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi that works as a permanent post-conflict forum for dialogue among the three countries. The relaunching of this organization is bearing its first fruits in areas such as regional security and the development of a regional economic infrastructure.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a cornerstone of continental security. The European Union is committed to remaining engaged in the country and in the Great Lakes region stabilization process. Joint, coordinated efforts by the international community are necessary. We recently shared our analysis with other partners in the international contact group on the Great Lakes in a meeting in Brussels on 15 April. Those efforts must be supported by a strong and ongoing commitment on the part of the Congolese authorities, because sustained efforts and substantial resources will be required to ensure sustained progress on the main challenges that I have just identified. For its part, the European Union will continue to make its contribution to the goals of achieving peace, development and stability in the country. In that regard, we will continue our close cooperation with the Congolese authorities, the United Nations and other international partners.

The President (*spoke in French*): I once again give the floor to Mr. Tshibanda.

Mr. Tshibanda (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank all of today's speakers for the outstanding quality of their statements and their contributions to the debate.

I am gratified to note that we have been able to achieve consensus in at least two areas, namely, on the progress made and on the challenges still before us. I note that the assessment we have made here on both sides of the table is almost the same and that there has been a great deal of resolve to jointly continue our work, solidifying and making more effective the partnership between the United Nations and the international community, on the one hand, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the other.

I would like to reassure the Council yet again of the resolve of the Congolese Government to continue its efforts to build peace and democracy and, more specifically, to organize over the next few months elections that will be fair and democratic, and therefore credible. Those elections must be open to all and take place with guarantees of freedom of expression, access to the media, as broad participation as possible and security for all. We have indicated what type of assistance we would like to receive from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). I hope that we will very soon have the assistance we need from MONUSCO for logistical support. The challenge is not to make the resources available, it is to make them available on time so as to prevent a negative impact on the already very tight schedule that has been set for the elections. Having heard the various statements, I am sure that both at the level of the United Nations and the Council and at the level of the various partnerships, the figure I mentioned earlier for the budget necessary to organize the elections properly will in fact be made available.

I would like briefly to revisit a few issues referred to by representatives of various States today, especially the matter of rape and sexual violence. I would like to reassure the Council that this issue is of the very highest concern to the Government. The same is true of the recruitment of children by armed groups. To ignore the rape of even a single woman would be a tragedy, and the fact that there are so many of them keeps us, the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from sleeping at night. The fact that progress in resolving this issue is slow in no way reflects a lack of political will. It is a function of the very complex nature of the problem and of our limited capacity. We are working to reform our judicial sector and attempting to improve the ability of our army and our police forces to ensure security in regions where it is now lacking in order to reduce the conditions of lawlessness that breed the tragedy of rape.

I would like to say that we understand the need to raise public awareness by citing statistics. But I beg an equal understanding that the problem itself is tragic enough as it is. I understand the positive motive of consciousness-raising behind some of the statistics cited. But I believe that they need to be taken in context, as the figures go back to 2006. I think some progress has been made since then. But I say context also because, if one were to add up the figures, the results would mean that every single woman in the Democratic Republic of the Congo would have been raped. I certainly do not say this because I want to minimize the problem in any way. But I believe that together we should strive to avoid stigmatizing both the country and its women. We welcome the work carried out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Combat, whom we recently hosted in our country and to whom we would like to reiterate our readiness to cooperate to ensure that together we come up with the most effective ways to put an end to this scourge.

On the subject of the illicit exploitation of natural resources, which was mentioned throughout the day, I would like to say that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is very actively engaged in the issue. We played a decisive role in the preparation and adoption of instruments adopted at the Summit in Lusaka. Since then, the Government has championed the effective implementation of those instruments. I am gratified to be able to say here that thus far all the States in the region have shown understanding and a readiness to cooperate. I think that this cooperation is important in halting illegal exploitation. In that regard, I should like to take this opportunity to take note of the support and measures being taken elsewhere at the international level, in particular by the United States.

With regard to the return of refugees and displaced persons, I should like to reassure the Council that this is being organized in line with the provisions of refugee law through meetings of the joint commission involving my country, countries hosting refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This process is under way and provisions are being made on the ground for the dignified and safe return of refugees and displaced persons.

In conclusion, I would like to say a word on the suggestions made by the representatives of the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. I should like to commend their notable contributions in rebuilding and bring peace to my country. These are our country's main partners. We welcome not just their contributions but also the suggestions and proposals they make to us in the context of our dialogue with them. I take note of the suggestions that have been made. I am aware of their importance to the Government's efforts under way. I also note that many of them incorporate elements to which I referred with regard to my Government's priorities in various areas, including improving growth and continuing economic development throughout the country, including the so-called missing middle, namely, the role of small- and medium-sized businesses to generate wealth and opportunity as widely as possible throughout Congolese society.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your initiative in organizing this special meeting of the Security Council on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would also like to assure you that the Congolese Government very much appreciates the contribution of the United Nations system, the Security Council and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We hope that, in the coming weeks and months, we will make progress in our dialogue on redefining our cooperation in the coming years.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Minister Tshibanda for his statement.

I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

> "The Security Council welcomes its enhanced dialogue with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It reiterates that the challenges the Democratic Republic of the Congo is facing as it enters a phase of stabilization and peace consolidation require a strategic partnership with the United Nations, including with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The Security Council appreciates and welcomes the constructive approach of the Congolese authorities, and welcomes the efforts made by MONUSCO in this regard.
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> "The Security Council stresses the importance of four key issues for the stabilization of the country: peace and security, the forthcoming elections, governance and institution building, and economic development.
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> "The Security Council considers that the overall peace and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has improved in recent years. It acknowledges the results of the action taken to address the threat of foreign and national armed groups, particularly the progress made against the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda, including through the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process. The Security Council underlines that significant security challenges remain, in particular in the Kivus and Orientale province. The Council is concerned about the difficulties which have been encountered throughout the integration process of the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the limited progress made in the reform of the security forces, both army and police. It calls on the Congolese authorities to swiftly adopt the necessary legal framework and implement their long-term vision for the role and structure of the army and police, and strongly encourages MONUSCO and international partners to provide coordinated support for these reforms.
>
> "The Security Council reiterates its deep concern about the persistent high levels of violence, especially sexual violence, and human rights abuses against civilians, mostly affecting women and children, including the use and recruitment of children by parties to the conflict, in particular in the eastern part of the country. It reiterates its deep concern about continuing activities of the Lord's Resistance Army. It calls for an urgent end to the attacks against the civilian population by all armed groups. It condemns all violations of human rights, including those committed by some elements of the Congolese security forces. The Council welcomes progress with the recent prosecutions after the incidents in Fizi and other cases. It

reiterates the urgent need for the swift prosecution of all perpetrators of human rights abuses, and urges the Congolese authorities, with the support of MONUSCO, to implement the appropriate responses to address this challenge, including in Walikale. It urges the Congolese Government to take all necessary steps, including ensuring proper conduct by their armed forces in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons.

"The Security Council notes with interest the electoral calendar presented by the Congolese authorities and urges the Congolese Government as well as all relevant parties to ensure an environment conducive to a credible, inclusive, transparent, peaceful, timely, free and fair electoral process. It expresses its thanks to MONUSCO and the international community for their support to the electoral process to date, and encourages continued support. The Security Council recalls that ensuring freedom of expression and freedom of movement for all candidates, as well as for journalists, human rights defenders and actors from civil society, is of the utmost importance. It calls upon the Government and all Congolese stakeholders to meet their responsibility in this regard, and further calls upon MONUSCO to support these efforts, in particular through the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, enhanced and regular dialogue with the Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante through the Election Partnership Committee, and follow-up on human rights violations. It also calls upon MONUSCO and all relevant international actors to swiftly support the training of the Congolese police, and for donors to provide support for police equipment. It requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed on the electoral process, including on MONUSCO's support to this process.

"The Security Council stresses the need for urgent progress, with regard to governance and institution building, on judicial reform and support to domestic courts, in order to ensure the rule of law and strengthen the fight against impunity. In this regard, the Council notes the interest of the Congolese authorities for establishing specialized mixed courts to address serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, complemented by their existing cooperation with the International Criminal Court. It calls upon MONUSCO and other relevant international actors to support the efforts of the Congolese Government in these fields, and to assist in the restoration of basic services, including access to justice, road access, priority health and education infrastructures, and security infrastructures, throughout the country, and especially in conflict-affected areas.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of economic development to ensure long-term stabilization and peace consolidation. It stresses that special attention should be placed on women's empowerment and participation in the economy, job creation for youth, and reintegration of former combatants. It also underlines the need for further progress in ensuring that the trade in mineral resources is founded on sound economic governance practices, and is therefore transparent, fair and legal. It notes that urgent attention is needed to create an enabling environment to attract the public and private investment necessary to address food security, infrastructure and energy needs. The Security Council reiterates that regional cooperation with neighbouring countries should play a key role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's economic development.

"The Security Council calls upon the international community, the African Union and all relevant subregional organizations to further engage in support of the stabilization efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably in the fields of security, the fight against illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources, and socio-economic development."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2011/11.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6540

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6540th meeting

Thursday, 19 May 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Sun Xiaobo
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Vinay Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Serry.

Mr. Serry: Two events with important implications took place during the reporting period. On 27 April, Palestinian factions concluded a reconciliation agreement under Egyptian auspices designed to overcome years of division. Last Sunday, there were serious clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in Syria, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory during the largest popular demonstration of Palestinians in many years.

Both developments remind us that popular protests and political change continue to sweep the Arab world and shake the unsustainable status quo found in many parts of the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict will not be immune to these dramatic developments. One way or another, change will come to it, too. This change must be shaped to positive ends.

Yet we are worryingly stuck regarding the search for a two-State solution. As evidenced by Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to the Knesset on 16 May and President Abbas's opinion piece in the *New York Times* on the same date, both sides profess their desire to negotiate a two-State solution. However, deep differences over the stalemate in the peace process remain. There is a genuine lack of trust, and no credible initiative has yet been taken that could overcome the impasse. In the absence of negotiations, and amidst continued Israeli settlement expansion, the Palestinians are preparing to approach the United Nations in September to seek recognition of a Palestinian State.

I turn first to the Palestinian reconciliation agreement. Bearing in mind resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), the Secretary-General has continually supported efforts for Palestinian unity and the work of Egypt in that regard. The Secretary-General wishes to see unity in the framework of the positions of the Quartet and the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Within this framework, the Secretary-General asked me to represent him on 4 May at the ceremony in Cairo that marked the conclusion of the accord. The accord was signed by Fatah and Hamas, together with other Palestinian factions. Faction representatives met again earlier this week in Cairo for discussions on the implementation of the accord, which will clearly be a process rather than an event. The accord has been widely welcomed by the Palestinians, who have strongly pressed their leaders in this direction. Civil society figures have been active in the process.

Under the accord, a Palestinian Government of national "capables", or technocrats, is to be formed, with the Prime Minister and ministers agreed by consensus. The Government is to prepare for simultaneous elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council, the presidency and, where this is possible, the Palestinian National Council, in one year, organized and overseen by reformed electoral institutions. During the transitional period until elections, the Government is to begin reunifying Palestinian institutions and follow up on Gaza reconstruction.

The agreement also envisages the establishment of an interim committee to address national political issues, in which Hamas and other non-PLO factions would participate with PLO factions, including Fatah, pending National Council elections. However, it is explicitly stated that the work of this committee will not contradict the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee of the PLO, which is recognized internationally as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

At the Cairo ceremony, President Abbas reiterated his full commitment to the platform of the PLO, which has long accepted resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), recognized Israel's right to exist in peace and security and renounced violence and terrorism, and which remains committed to existing

agreements. He has stated that any Government he commissions would support this programme.

The accord envisages the reform of Palestinian security forces on a national and professional basis, and the establishment of a security committee of professional officers, with the participation of Egypt. Security reform is likely to be a gradual process. The current realities are expected to continue for the immediate future. In particular, we believe it is understood that the security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel in the West Bank must continue, and this is to be respected by all parties. Equally, we believe there is an intention to observe the calm that is now in place between Israel and Gaza, which had been secured in early April with Egyptian and United Nations assistance.

I can report that no rockets and three mortars were fired from Gaza during the reporting period. Calm from Hamas has been met with Israeli restraint. There were five Israeli incursions and no air strikes into Gaza. Apart from incidents on 15 May, which I will come to later, one alleged militant and five Palestinian civilians were injured in incidents with Israel security forces, while there were no Israeli deaths, injuries or material damage around Gaza. The de facto authorities in Gaza must now actively maintain this encouraging and important calm. Israel must show maximum restraint and ensure an environment conducive to calm.

In the West Bank, existing security cooperation and performance has been sustained. A seventh battalion of Palestinian security forces returned to the West Bank from training in Jordan with international assistance, raising the number of newly trained security personnel in the West Bank to over 3,500. We stress the importance of this process continuing under any future Government.

Some Hamas statements have suggested that the faction is ready, within the framework of the accord, to submit to national decisions on issues on which the movement itself has extreme positions. However, other statements assert those extreme positions in worrying terms. Statements such as those calling on the PLO to renounce its recognition of Israel, lauding Osama bin Laden or stressing that the movement's sole programme is resistance are a reminder of why deep international concerns remain and why we must follow developments vigilantly.

We also note Prime Minister Netanyahu's serious concerns about the accord, which have been repeated to me by many Israeli interlocutors.

Yet, we would counsel against reaching a predetermined view about the accord's merits or prospects. The reunification of Gaza and the West Bank is a vital goal for all interested in peace, and the process should not be underlined in its infancy. We must encourage the formation of a non-factional Government under President Abbas, with an effective Prime Minister and ministers, who are able to preserve the functioning security apparatus on the ground in the West Bank, adhere to calm in Gaza, expand the State-building agenda, oversee reconstruction in Gaza, begin the process of reintegration and prepare for new elections. The Government should be able to fully support President Abbas's programme. The international community's expectations reflected in Quartet statements are directed to any Palestinian Government and are clear.

I am pleased that the Israeli Government has now decided to transfer value added tax and customs revenues that were withheld from the Government of Prime Minster Fayyad for a period after the announcement of the reconciliation accord. These funds are collected from Palestinians and are essential for meeting normal budgetary gaps and paying salaries to employees, including security personnel who are maintaining cooperation with Israel. Israel's adherence to its international obligations is the right way to promote cooperation with a responsible Palestinian partner.

We appeal to donors to remain fully engaged. To date, the Palestinian Authority has received about $30 million less per month than what is budgeted for the first four and a half months of 2011. Inadequate donor support for the budget would undermine Government functions and the State-building agenda, affecting the ability of the Palestinian Authority to borrow to meet recurrent expenditures. Continued engagement based on an assessment of the make-up and real policies of any new Government under President Abbas can empower moderation, enhance security, restore hope, help begin Gaza's reconstruction and contribute to reunification.

We take note of President Abbas's concerns about Israel's continued expansion of settlements contrary to the Road Map and international law. We call once

again for Israel to freeze settlement activity, which continued apace during the reporting period in the East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank. We also continue to stress the need for further measures regarding Area C and East Jerusalem, both in enabling Palestinian efforts and supporting vulnerable communities.

Further measures of liberalization in Gaza are also essential to solidify the modest progress already made and empower those seeking continued calm. The Secretary-General urges the Government of Israel to take further meaningful and far-reaching steps to end the closure of Gaza within the framework of resolution 1860 (2009). A free flow of both people and construction materials in Gaza remains a central objective of the United Nations.

At present, we urgently need the approval of further projects, including two United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) housing projects in Khan Younis and Rafah, totalling 1,100 units. Moreover, the market in aggregate, steel bar and cement — the so-called ABC of construction in Gaza — can and should be liberalized by the Israeli authorities, particularly given the quantities of construction material now entering through unregulated tunnels.

The United Nations believes that all assistance and legitimate goods destined for Gaza should be channelled through official crossings and established channels, as requested by the Quartet on 21 June 2010 and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on 13 April 2011. In this regard, we continue to urge action to combat the smuggling of weapons.

The Secretary-General is also following with concern media reports of potential new flotillas to Gaza that can provoke unnecessary confrontations. The Secretary-General calls on all Governments concerned to use their influence to discourage such flotillas, which carry the potential for escalation. He further calls on all to act responsibly to avoid any violent incidents.

We must also open Gaza to enable its civil society and children to engage with the world. I can personally attest to the positive impact of the visit of United Nations Messenger for Peace Daniel Barenboim and the Orchestra for Gaza, comprising musicians from leading European orchestras, who performed a concert of works by Mozart on 3 May in Gaza.

I renew our calls for Hamas to release and allow humanitarian access to Israeli Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit, who will have been in captivity for five years next month. Now is clearly the time to resolve this humanitarian issue through a prisoner exchange. In that context, we also follow with concern the situation of several thousand Palestinians in Israeli prisons, and we continue to underscore the importance of the release of prisoners to the Palestinian Authority.

Let me now turn to the serious confrontations that took place on 15 May between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in Syria, Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territory, as Palestinians demonstrated in large numbers, marking what they call "Nakba Day".

Allow me to elaborate on some of the most serious incidents. Regarding the occupied Syrian Golan, at least 1,000 to 1,200 civilians, the vast majority of them Palestinian, were allowed into the area of separation on the Syrian side, to which access is tightly controlled by the Syrian authorities. They gathered opposite the village of Majdal Shams, on the Israeli-occupied side. An estimated 200 to 300 demonstrators who had crossed the ceasefire line broke through the Israeli technical fence, crossing a clearly marked minefield despite attempts by the Syrian police to block them. After firing warning shots, the IDF opened fire in an attempt to stop protesters from reaching the Israeli-occupied side. Early reports indicate that four people were killed and approximately 48 injured by bullets, while approximately 87 others suffered gas inhalation. Thirteen Israeli soldiers were also injured in the incident. Subsequently, the majority of the few hundred civilians who had crossed into the Israeli-occupied Golan were escorted by local villagers and returned to the Syrian side. Of the three infiltrators subsequently arrested by Israeli police, two were returned to Syria and one remains in Israeli custody.

In southern Lebanon, thousands of Palestinian refugees gathered in the area of Maroun al-Ras. While most demonstrators protested peacefully away from the Blue Line, an estimated 300 to 400 demonstrators broke away from the demonstration and approached the Israeli technical fence. They started throwing stones and interfering with the fence. The IDF opened fire to repel the demonstrators at the fence. The Lebanese Armed Forces also fired shots in order to disperse the demonstrators. Official Lebanese figures say that 10 protestors were killed and 112 injured.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) were in close contact with the parties throughout the incidents, trying to restore calm. UNIFIL and UNDOF are now separately investigating both incidents, in accordance with their respective mandates. We recall that full compliance by all parties with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 350 (1974) is essential.

In the occupied West Bank on 15 May, 164 people were reportedly injured, mostly in Area C and East Jerusalem, where Israeli security forces are present, while Palestinian security forces generally prevented demonstrators in Area A from approaching Israeli security positions. In Gaza, 80 people were reportedly injured in clashes between demonstrators and the IDF in the Beit Hanoun area near the Erez crossing. On the same day, one Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire in the buffer zone area in Gaza. We await details of an incident in Tel Aviv that day involving a truck which left one Israeli killed and 17 injured.

The Secretary-General expressed his deep concern at the fact that a significant number of people were killed or injured during the events of 15 May. He called on all concerned to show restraint and refrain from provocations, so as to prevent any escalation of tensions and ensure that civilians involved in protests are not killed or injured. We further note that the protests involved violations of the Blue Line between Israel and Lebanon and the disengagement line along the occupied Golan Heights, and stress the importance of the Governments in the area ensuring respect for these lines.

Among the other serious incidents that took place during the reporting period, two were fatal. A Palestinian child was killed in East Jerusalem on 14 May, apparently by a settler. An Israeli civilian was killed and four others injured by Palestinian security forces on 24 April during an uncoordinated visit by settlers to a Palestinian-controlled religious site in the West Bank.

I would like now to turn briefly to the situation in Lebanon, where, with the exception of the grave incident of 15 May that I just reported, the overall situation in the UNIFIL area of operations has remained generally stable over the last month. Israeli air violations continued on an almost daily basis.

At the political level, almost four months after his nomination as Prime Minister-designate by President Sleiman, consultations by Najib Mikati with the new parliamentary majority have not led to agreement on the composition of Lebanon's next Government. We continue to believe that a Government supported by all is critical to enabling the country to face important challenges in the political, economic, social and security spheres.

At this difficult time in the region, we take this opportunity to urge continued funding for UNRWA and its support for refugees. The Agency faces an overall deficit of nearly $65 million in 2011 in its General Fund, a shortfall that if not bridged would have significant consequences. UNRWA also requires an additional $6 million in support for its 2011 Summer Games activities for children in Gaza.

We are now three months away from September. There is a State-building agenda that has ensured Palestinian institutional readiness for statehood in the West Bank, and there is now a unity process in its infancy. We hope that real security and economic improvements can be continued in the West Bank and broadened to begin to include Gaza, and that elections can take place in a year. We urge all parties to give this process a chance, while reminding the Palestinians of the importance of agreeing on a Government that can live up to the expectations of the people, meet the concerns of the international community and support negotiations with Israel.

But with September just around the corner, a meaningful political initiative offers the only prospect for reaching September with the various dynamics in play working together towards one objective: a negotiated, two-State solution. In the absence of an initiative, it is too early to assess whether September will bring a new and more effective paradigm for resolving the conflict through negotiations, or renewed confrontation between the parties in the diplomatic arena or on the ground.

We strongly agree with United States President Obama that it is more than ever vital to solve this conflict, and we will be following closely his speech on the region today. We also await the address of Prime Minister Netanyahu to the United States Congress next week, and whether an initiative for breaking the logjam will be announced. We will continue to seek enhanced and substantive Quartet engagement to shape the

process between now and September, as well as beyond. We must show purpose, rather than paralysis, as we approach a critical period in the search for peace in the Middle East.

In closing, let me thank retiring United States Envoy George Mitchell for his two years of tireless and difficult work on peace in the Middle East. The Secretary-General and I appreciated our close working relationship with him and his team. We will continue to work closely with the United States and all our regional and international partners in the quest for a two-State solution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.